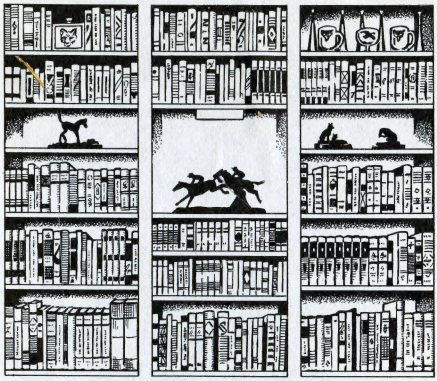
GONE AWA-A-A-AY!
by
FRED GOTTON.



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"GONE AWAY."

TO

Viscount Combermere,

THAN WHOM

IN ALL THE WORLD NO FINER JUDGE OF HORSE OR

HORSEMANSHIP EXISTS,

This Book I dedicate.

FREDERICK COTTON.

PREFACE.

Having written my book, I will proceed to put the cart before the horse and write my Preface. I write of sport—sport et præterea nihil! Oh, what a ring is there in the word. I grant that there is no word more abused, as it is applied to anything and everything by some; but when it conveys to the mind of the hearer the burst of melody from the throats of eighteen couple of foxhounds, the roar of the tiger when the bullet hits him, the charge of a wounded wild bull, the whirr of the reel as the

twenty-pound salmon rushes through the foam, then it becomes the finest word in the English language. This book does not pretend to have a plot; there is just enough to make it hang together, and that is all. There is a hero and there is a heroine, and there are several other performers on our temporary stage, both biped and quadruped. As to my hero, I confess that I have got very fond of him, and if I were to meet him in real life I should like to ask him to dinner, and do him right well. By-the-way, there is one little patch of gorse in the corner to draw, and that holds a fox. The story of the Big Grey Boar and the Tiger Hunt are both absolutely true. Those of my readers who have been in India and partaken of the sport of pig-sticking will very likely be inclined to doubt the truth of the pig story; but it

is true, though, I grant, an uncommon and improbable story. The hero of the Tiger Hunt is a gallant soldier, whose fame as a shekharry is well known throughout the length and breadth of India.

Written in the Captain's cabin on board the steamship "Arawa."

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"GONE AWAY."

Chapter I.

"IN MEDIAS RES."

"Well, I'll bar Mark, Latitude, and Rosebud, and take ten to one that I pick it. Is anybody on?"

These words, emanating from one who, though supposed to be a good all-round sportsman, was not in the habit of betting to any extent, caused for the moment a dead silence in the ante-room of the 150th, where for the last few minutes wagers had been laid and taken with as much earnestness and excitement as though the scene were Tattersall's on the eve of the Derby.

"Sit tight, Charlie," whispered Bob Dundas to his pal Charlie Wenman; "Poynter has taken up the running, and I have reasons for thinking that he knows a lot more about it than these fellows give him credit for."

"Well, I don't mind laying you eight to one against anything in the race bar those three," said Graham of the Hussars, who was that night dining with two or three others of his regiment at St. Nicholas Hall, which was the mess-house of the 150th.

"Split the difference; make it nine, and I'll take it in ponies, fifties, or hundreds."

"What the deuce this means I don't know," said Graham; "you don't mean to back the old public failure, surely?"

"If by 'public failure' you mean my own old crock, Garryowen, *yes!*" said Cis Poynter.

"Garryowen!" "Garryowen!" "Garryowen!" burst from the lips of every occupant of the anteroom, in accents of surprise, and, in some instances, of almost contempt.

"Why, I thought you had lent him to Miss Bawtry to hack," said one, "and had given up all idea of trying to train him."

"I would lay you any price against *him*," said another, "if I made a book like Graham."

"Do you know how often the horse has broken down?" said another, and so on.

When the babel had somewhat subsided, Cis Poynter continued, "Are you on, Graham?"

"Yes, I am," said Graham, "and though I am

not in the habit of laying such big bets as nine hundred to one hundred, still I am so positive that this horse cannot beat any of the three favourites, that I will chance it for once."

"All right," said Cis Poynter, and producing his pocket-book he proceeded to book the wager:

"One hundred to nine hundred Garryowen, Graham."

"Now that I have laid you the price, you won't mind telling us why you have made so strong a move in his favour."

"Certainly not," said Poynter. "The 'public failure' (as you are polite enough to call him) is fairly sound. He has done a bit of work; it has been raining for nearly thirty-six hours, and the going will suit his old legs. I have not forgotten how well he fenced last year, till he was knocked over by that brute Skyscraper. He is sure to jump the country, which is more than a lot of the others will, and he has a tremendous pull in the weights. If he doesn't run a fair horse this time he deserves to be shot."

"But who have you got to ride him?" said Graham. "Kimbell of the Canadian Rifles rides the favourite, Lance rides Latitude, Richards rides Rosebud — there are the three best men engaged. The other fellows all ride their own: I

don't know anyone else in the garrison who even pretends to ride."

"I shall put up our last joined," said Cis; "young Goodwin; he comes of a good old sporting lot that have kept hounds for four generations, and have always hunted them themselves, and it will be odd if he can't shove along as well as most of them."

By this time the ante-room had become almost empty, and as it was long after the witching hour and Graham found that he could get nothing definite out of Cis Poynter, he thought he might as well say good night.

"Another B. and S., and a weed to light me home," said he, "and I will sing 'Dulce Domum.' Dash it all," soliloquized he, "I almost wish I hadn't laid such a big bet against that old horse. Poynter is no fool, and he must have tried him pretty well. He certainly has a tremendous pull in the weights, but if Mark and Latitude only stand up, they are bound to beat him far enough, surely."

We now propose to give our readers a peep behind the scenes of this little drama. First and foremost, the race in question, which was to be run on the morrow, was neither more nor less than the "Canadian Grand Military," open to all

horses the property of officers on full pay in Canada. This was the seventh year since its inauguration, and it had gradually become the most popular race in the "Dominion of Canada." To win the "Grand Military" was the height of every sporting soldier's ambition, and great was the rivalry that existed between the various regiments. The wagering had on this occasion completely dwarfed that of previous years. Not a single corps in the Dominion was without its representative, and there was hardly a single one of the eighteen nominations that had not its admirers and backers. It mattered not whether their credentials were of the best or worst, the men of the "troop" or "company" would have considered it high treason to back any other than their own; and in "canteen" and barrack-room the fun grew just as fast and furious as it did at the various officers' messes in the different parts of the town. Civilians, too, caught the fever, and but little else was talked of at the clubs, and wherever men did congregate, but the Grand Military. The favourite was a chestnut horse called "Mark," a good bred one, with plenty of pace, up to weight, and a beautiful fencer. He had last year's honours thick upon him, as he had won the big race in a common canter with his

eleven stone eight on his five year old back. Certainly he had now twelve stone thirteen to carry, including his ten pound penalty, but where else were you to look for the winner? He was as sound as the proverbial bell of brass, had undergone a good preparation, the acknowledged best horseman in Canada was to be his pilot, and the stable made no secret of their confidence in his ability to win. There were, however, one or two real good judges of racing who had watched his last year's finish, and they had come to the conclusion that if he not had it all his own way for the last mile and a-half of the journey, he would in all probability have fallen instead of winning, as though his rider steadied him a lot at his fences, he was a good deal inclined to hit them hard towards the finish, and it struck these close observers that he was by no means sorry to get home.

"A very slovenly performance," said Cis Poynter to himself, as he replaced his glasses, and proceeded to descend from the top of the coach, whence he had witnessed the race, to drink the winner's health; and the hand-shake which he bestowed on the owner was not the less hearty, albeit he had dropped a hundred over it. A philosopher was Cis Poynter, who took the rough

and the smooth as they came. Time had been when, as a cornet in a crack cavalry regiment, he had learnt the bitter lesson, drained the cup well nigh to the dregs, and only by the merest shave managed to keep his head above water sufficiently to enable him to exchange to a marching regiment in India. And to India, with the reader's permission, we propose to follow him. Here, profiting by past experience, he gradually got a useful team of horses together, and after his first year of apprenticeship at the game he managed not only to hold his own, but soon became one of the acknowledged best judges of racing in India. Seldom, indeed, did he fail to pick up one or two of the plums at the various race meetings. He was a fine, strong horseman, with the best of nerve, and as he was a handy weight, and took care to keep himself fit, he rarely had to cast about for a jockey; and as to train and ride your own, if you are clever enough, gives you an undeniable pull, it was only natural that whatever Cis Poynter rode was as good a favourite as anything. He was, of course, as all owners are, pestered by the ignorant and inquisitive as to his intentions, and as to his opinions as regarded the capabilities of the various competitors. His answer, in substance, at least, was

invariably the same: "As to my horse, I believe him to be well, and I ride him; as to the others, I recommend you to ask their respective owners;" he was not often bothered in this way by the same man, and it gradually dawned upon even the most obtuse and persistent of bores that they might as well leave Cis Poynter and his horses alone, for all the information they got.

"A man who kept his own counsel, and who always went as straight through life as he did to hounds," was the verdict delivered of him by one who was far from a bad judge of human nature. Apart from racing he had as much to say as most of his fellow-men, but in his estimation silence in matters pertaining to things equine was indeed golden. A particularly good all-round man, too, was he, and during his five years in India he managed to get more sport than ninety-nine out of every hundred of his fellows. Lots of exercise and no "pegs" kept him in blissful ignorance that he was the owner of such a thing as a liver.

Though always scrupulously polite to the sex, he was not one of those who sought their society, and though all women liked him immensely, when they knew him, he had never been known to have even the very smallest "affaire de cœur." On one occasion, at a Hill Station, he was the victim of a

desperate attack on the part of a most seductive little widow, to the artillery of whose charms he was exposed for six weeks straight on end. She was "very hard hit." The whole station became immensely interested in the drama which was being played under their very eyes. Two of the men quartered there would have given a year's service for one such glance as were hourly bestowed on the insensible Cis. But all in vain were the blandishments of the fair charmer. He did not for one instant awake to the fact that he had inspired the lady in question with so violent a passion until one day when he got a bad fall at polo, and broke his collar-bone. The doctor having strapped him up, he asked him how long it would be before he could hope to play again, and the disciple of Æsculapius, who hailed from Hibernia, said, "Ah! me dear fellow! Shure, and there's no hurry to get well at all, when the ladies faint over ye as they did to-day."

"What!" said Cis; "faint over me? What nonsense you talk, doctor."

"Shure, and it's the thruth I'm tellin' ye; if it isn't may I niver taste another drop of whiskey."

"Gad, you must be in earnest then," said Cis, his curiosity now thoroughly aroused. "But who could faint over me, as you call it?"

"Well, I don't mean to say actually faint atop of ye, but go off with a shcream, and thin whin they come to, the first name on their lips is yours. 'Oh, is he killed? Tell me! tell me! Don't keep me in suspinse!' And thin whin they're tould that there's only something broken, another shcream, and thin hysterics, and rale wans too, for she didn't mind the iced water being thrown all over her dress, not a bit she didn't."

"For heaven's sake don't talk such incoherent rot," said Cis. "First of all you say *they*, as if all the ladies of the Station had fainted, and now you say *she*. Who is she?"

"Ah, get out wid ye! Shure, ye know the one that would."

"Upon my soul I don't," said Cis.

"Lord deliver us," answered the Doctor. "Why it's been the talk of the whole Station for the last month or more."

"Much obliged to the Station, I am sure," responded he, "but I must request you to enlighten me as to who the lady may be for all that."

"Shure, thin, it's Mrs. Pepys, of course."

This set Cis thinking, and he now remembered how, somehow or other, he had always found himself alongside the above-mentioned lady when

out riding and at dinner—on all occasions, indeed; also, how she had invariably appealed to him in any little difficulty. He reflected, too, that invitations to dine at the Colonel's bungalow had of late been extended to him with increasing frequency.

Mrs. Pepys was the Colonel's wife's sister, and after her husband's death had come out to stay with her brother-in-law and his wife. She had married very young, and, though now a widow for more than two years, she was but two-and-twenty.

It all dawned on Cis during the next day or two. First and foremost, that very evening he received a note from the Colonel's wife, asking him to come up to the bungalow to be nursed.

"You will be in the best of hands," said she, "as Agnes spent six months in a London Hospital some years ago, and is most anxious to try her hand at her old profession."

This Cis, with many thanks, declined. He would, indeed, have been opening the gates of the fortress and laying down his arms had he accepted, as, when two pretty women put their heads together, the one to subjugate and the other to assist in all the little schemes for attack, God

help the poor man, especially when, as in this instance, he is more or less of an invalid, and consequently so much more amenable to their discipline.

Now, Cis Poynter was not the least flattered by this marked preference which the fair lady in question had shewn for his society; he was, on the contrary, very much annoyed—of very different material to so many who, in his position, would have delighted in their conquest. His ideas of right and wrong, and of honour, were perhaps, for the present day, considerably far-fetched. At all events, he at once made up his mind in this instance as to the course which it was his duty to pursue.

"Only one thing for it," said he; "that is quite evident. I must go; no help for it."

He took therefore the first opportunity of asking his Colonel's permission to return to "Head-quarters."

"I must make the race-horses my excuse," thought he.

"Well," said his chief, "I think that you are the first on record voluntarily to quit the Hills in the hot weather; but if you are really anxious about the horses, and think that they require your presence, you must please yourself. You will

come and dine with us, though, before you go, of course."

"I should have been delighted," said Cis; "but with your permission, I intend to start to-night."

"In which case, good-bye and *bon voyage*. Give a look to my crocks, like a good fellow, and if you have time, as soon as you are fit to do so, bustle the bay waller (that I bought from Nolan) over the hurdles a time or two. You said you would ride him for me in the Poonah Hunt Stakes, and he wants a bit of racing over his fences still."

A line to the Colonel's wife, wishing her good-bye, with kindest regards to poor little Mrs. Pepys; and Mahableshawur knew him no more, for that season at all events.

Three days after Cis walked into his Major's quarters, greatly to the latter's astonishment.

"Poynter, by all that's marvellous. Strapped up, too."

"Broke my collar-bone at polo. Randall's stick flew out of his hand between my pony's fore legs and brought us down a buster; soon be all right, though. Maloney says I shall be fit to ride gallops in a fortnight more."

"But why the deuce didn't you stay in the

Hills till you were fit to ride, at all events? Why you needn't have come back for a month. Besides, you had Maloney there, he is worth a dozen of all the other doctors. Fancy quitting an earthly paradise like Mahableshawur to be grilled in a Hades of a hole like this!"

"Anxious about the horses," said Cis. "I must make my racing pay or drop it altogether."

"By Jove," said the Major, "if you had experienced such heat as we have undergone the last fortnight I think you would chance the horses."

Thus ended that little episode in our hero's career (for we may as well inform our readers without further delay that he is the centre figure on our stage, and if, when you lay down the book you say, "Well, Cis Poynter is a real good sort," we shall feel that we have succeeded, at all events to a certain extent, in our endeavour to pourtray our idea of a soldier and a gentleman.)

Time slipped insensibly away. The regiment was under orders for home, to the infinite delight of some, to the disgust of others. There can be no doubt that for a poor man, a very poor man, India has many advantages over anywhere else. What with extra pay and allowances, there are men who can manage to live out of their

profession without any assistance from other sources.

Cis Poynter was delighted at the idea of once more sitting down to ride over an English country in pursuit of the "gallant little gentleman in red."

Chapter II.

THE BIG GREY BOAR.

The regiment had for the last year and a-half been quartered at Poonah, which, "as all who have ever had the good luck to be there," are aware, is the Melton of pig-sticking.

The "Deccan," which was the battle-ground of the pig-stickers, fortunately permitted of August and September hunting.

Cis and a few other ardent spirits had decided to have just one more expedition after "pigs" before the regiment took its departure from the sunny East. Horses, spears, and clothes were sent on, and all preparations made. On their arrival at the scene of action the scouts reported two good sounders, one of eleven and another of nine, close handy, and at that moment doubtless dreaming of some succulent morsels. Early to bed was the order of the night, as each meant to get first spear on the morrow, or, at all events, have a real good try for it. Day had barely broken ere the half-dozen sportsmen, attended by

their numerous servants and about fifty villagers, started from the village.

We omitted to mention that the big grey boar which had on three several occasions got off scot-free, and which inhabited a solitary hill on the other side of the river, had been seen the day before, but as the scout who saw him had no whit disturbed his highness, there was but little doubt that he would on this occasion afford them one more opportunity of "bringing him to book." The beaters having crossed the river higher up, made a *détour*, and got above the slip of jungle which fringed the bottom of the hill. The horsemen posted themselves so that it was impossible the quarry could escape unobserved, and then with breathless excitement awaited the all-important result.

"Hark! what was that?" The beaters were on the track, their shouts and yells grew nearer and louder, and then he broke. There are many good men and true who, though passionately fond of fox hunting, still maintain that the excitement attendant on the brilliant burst of a big pig is unparalleled.

Cis Poynter was riding a little horse that he called "Bobbery," laziest of the lazy, till he saw or knew that a pig was on foot, and then he

became literally a fiend incarnate. The pig forded the shallow river, and shaking himself as he emerged from it, proceeded leisurely to trot across the rocky plain.

The clatter, however, of Bobbery and Packington's horse close behind him made him quicken his pace in a most extraordinary manner, and they had to gallop all they knew to even hold their own with him in his first spurt.

The pig had broken just about midway between Cis and Packington, who were about two hundred yards apart. The going was frightful, to say the least of it: rocks, stunted grass, and countless holes, almost entirely hidden by the dried grass. Nobody, unless they have actually seen it, can form any idea of the ghastly going, and yet these clever little Arabs rarely make a serious mistake. Cis and Packington had converged until they were now riding side by side within eighty yards of the pig. A stone wall, which formed the "bund" of a small tank, now barred the way. Over it went the pig, as active as a cat, and disappeared on the other side, but the splash which could both be seen and heard by his pursuers told them that if they cleared the wall they were in for a bath. Both horses charged it gallantly. Cis got over, but Packington's gee hit it hard, and turned

turtle; a bit of a struggle, and Packington emerged from underneath his horse, and the two proceeded to swim to the other side of the tank. Cis was now congratulating himself that he must get first spear, when he saw Crawford and Anderson galloping like mad for the tank. "This is the very deuce," thought he; "the pig will be on dry land in a few seconds; they must get first spear, unless I could make a good shot." No sooner thought than done, and taking careful aim, he threw the spear, and actually hit the boar on the back of the head.

A terrible disappointment this for Crawford who was some half-dozen lengths in front of Anderson, and who had now made quite sure of drawing first blood. The boar landed within twenty yards of Crawford, but instead of going straight on, he turned sharp for a sugar-cane field, which was less than a hundred yards distant. Imagine Crawford's joy to find that Cis Poynter's spear had only grazed the boar's head, and glancing off had failed to draw blood. At him again he went with redoubled ardour. The boar, however, had gained a fair lead by this manœuvre, and charging the ditch and fence which bounded the sugar-cane field, he got over the ditch, and gained the top of the fence, only, however, to roll

back again into the ditch on to his back, dead blown. Crawford galloped past him, and as he did so leant over, and most artistically drew first blood. This apparently exercised a beneficial effect on the boar, as he charged most gallantly, and avoiding the spear, he ripped the horse so badly that he fell on to his knees. By this time Cis Poynter came up, and sending his spear through his heart, he laid this good, game pig a corpse.

"Hard lines you didn't get first spear, old fellow," said Crawford. "You made a magnificent shot at the beggar, and there is not one man in a hundred who would ever have tried it."

"Well," said Cis, "it was long odds against it, but I really thought I had pulled it off."

One or two more spins, and a brace more pigs were killed. By this time the sun was high in the heavens, and "tiffin" was the order of the day. As they rode home in the evening there was not one of the party that did not regret that "pig-sticking" was in all probability a sealed book as far as the future was concerned.

Chapter III.

"TOO CLOSE A SHAVE TO BE PLEASANT."

Cis Poynter during his five years in India had some capital sport with tigers, and one of his adventures when in pursuit of this noble quarry is well worth relating. He had been out with a party for three weeks, and they had had very fair sport indeed. The heat, however, became so intense that all had had enough, with the exception of himself. The rest of the party, therefore, returned to the Cantonment, leaving Cis with his "shekharry," beaters, servants, and four pad elephants. The morning after he was left alone in his glory, a scout came hurrying into camp with the welcome news that two large tigers had that morning been seen fighting on the edge of the jungle. Now, though the grass had all been burnt on the plains, as was the annual custom, there were some beautiful patches of high cover left in the bends of the deep "nullah" that wound its serpentine course along just outside the forest, and which divided the jungle from the plain. Splendid covert were these patches, and

if there were a tiger in the neighbourhood you might safely bet even money that one of the aforesaid bits of covert would hold him.

Rejoiced, therefore, at the good news, Cis at once proceeded to the spot, making straight for a piece of covert just outside which these tigers had been seen fighting. On arriving within a short distance of the place, the *casus belli* was plainly to be seen, in the shape of a buffalo calf, which had evidently been killed on going to or returning from the water hole. Water was now becoming scarce, and it was only in comparatively few big holes that there was any left. The tigers, of course, in the dry weather frequented the vicinity of these holes, as, where there was water, there was also food for them.

Forming line, therefore, they proceeded to beat through the long, thick grass. They had not gone fifty yards ere the "mahout" on the elephant which carried Cis pointed out the motion of the grass about twenty yards in front of him. So thick, however, was it, that he could not see what the game was that was afoot. Almost simultaneously on the right, where the covert was not quite so thick, for one second he got a glimpse of a tiger.

"Two afoot in all probability," thought he.

The line steadily advanced, and at last one of the tigers, becoming enraged, bounded out of the covert with a roar, and gave a broadside shot. Cis hit him, and with another terrific roar he again sought the shelter of the covert. The line continued to advance, but the tiger did not again show himself until the line reached almost the extreme end of the covert. He then turned and charged the line, bounding through the thick covert in chase of a small pad elephant. This gave Cis another chance at him, of which, though only a snap shot, he took advantage. He again hit the tiger, which, turning round, gave chase to another pad elephant, and collared him by the hind leg.

If any of our readers have ever heard an elephant squeal, they will never forget it. The elephant in question gave vent to such unearthly yells and squeals, and kicked so lustily, that he managed to rid himself of the tiger, who probably thought that he had got hold of the devil. He then kept close, and the line must have gone over him. On arriving at the far end, again they turned and retraced their steps. The mahout on Cis's elephant was by this time intensely excited, and urging the elephant somewhat incautiously into a bit of denser covert, they came right on top of the

wounded beast. With one bound he seized the elephant by the root of the trunk with his teeth, at the same time holding on to each side of her head with his claws. Then ensued a desperate struggle ; the elephant, though unusually staunch, was small, and consequently not *very* strong.

Do what she would she could not free herself from the clutches of the monster, and it was impossible for Cis to shoot, as so violent was the the motion, that if he had he would not only have missed to a certainty, but if he had hit anything, it would probably have been either the elephant or the mahout. The latter's feelings can more easily be imagined than described. There he was, within one yard of the claws of this infuriated brute, and all that he could do was to hang on like grim death, as if he had dropped off and bolted, in all probability the tiger would have relinquished his hold on the elephant, and followed him.

Meanwhile, the struggles grew more furious. Backwards and forwards, up and down, now Cis found himself almost on the ground, and now up in the skies, and it was all that he could do to maintain his position in the howdah. All of a sudden over rolled the elephant prone on her side, sending Cis Poynter and his rifles flying through the air. Here was a nice predicament.

Within a few yards of a monstrous tiger, maddened with the pain of his wounds, and which might at any moment quit his hold on the elephant, and charge him, all unarmed as he was. The first thing was to get out of sight, if possible; he therefore ran behind the howdah. On arriving there he found to his great joy that there was one rifle left in. He accordingly advanced, and when within two yards of the tiger's head he pulled the trigger. Just at the same instant the elephant and tiger gave a desperate struggle, and he missed. Advancing still nearer he pulled again, ploughing a deep furrow up the brute's cheek. He relinquished his hold of the elephant with his teeth and claws, and Cis made up his mind that his hour had come; but what was his joy to find that in falling on to her side the elephant had pinned the tiger's hindquarters underneath her. He then rushed through the long grass, and got rifles from his "shekhary," and mounted one of the pad elephants. Just as he re-entered the covert he met his own elephant coming out, bleeding profusely and terribly mauled. His mahout was in the howdah, and looking as pale as a nigger can look. He had indeed good cause to be in a funk, if ever man had, for he had during the last few minutes gone through about

as terrible a time as it was possible to imagine. Replacing him with another mahout, Cis mounted this good game elephant again, and retraced his steps to the scene of action. On arriving, there was no sign of the tiger. Advancing, however, cautiously, he could hear him distinctly within a few yards, groaning and breathing heavily, so he fired two shots as nearly as possible where he thought he was. He listened, and all was still. He then told the mahout to urge the elephant gently forward. This he did; she then deliberately parted the thick screen of covert with her trunk, and disclosed to view the enormous tiger lying perfectly dead.

Greatly rejoiced was Cis that he had killed him after all, and that nothing more serious had happened, though he much deplored the wounding of his good little elephant.

Chapter IV.

A DEAL.

The good ship *Himalaya* conveyed the regiment home, and the middle of November saw them safely landed at Glasgow.

Cis Poynter had the good fortune to be sent on detachment to Westerley, a nice, clean little seaport town, the capital of Westershire, which, as all who have hunted there allow, is the Leicestershire of Scotland: a nice grass county, and carrying a good scent, and where "King Frost" but comparatively seldom interferes. Cis was charmed at his good luck. It was indeed a pleasant contrast to the old "Gallowgate" barracks in Glasgow, which were in the very slums of the town in those days, and were very different from the beautiful new barracks built some fifteen years ago at the West-end.

The Westerley detachment consisted of two companies, and as Cis was senior subaltern, he was sent in command of one of them; the second senior captain being in command of the detachment. He, though no sportsman himself, liked to

see others enjoy themselves, so that Cis had but little doubt as to his ability to hunt to his heart's content on his return from first leave, which he proceeded to take as soon as possible, as much for the purpose of getting two or three horses together as anything else.

In his palmy days Cis had always got his horses from one man, namely, Bond, of the "Hay-stack," near Wansford, and to him he went at once.

"Delighted to see you, Mr. Poynter. What a time you have been away, to be sure! Hardly time to show you the horses before dinner, I fear. What do you say if we just run through the stables, see them stripped, and you can try those that you think will suit you after you have had a bit of something to eat? I hope I may be allowed to say that you and I are too old friends for you to imagine that I want you to see the horses through 'rose-tinted spectacles,' with which a glass or two of what you used to call my 'old mahogany' is popularly supposed to endue the purchaser."

"Indeed, you may say that," said Cis; "I hope, however, that the 'October' is as good as ever that the Stilton cheese which always seemed to be in exactly the same stage of ripeness is still to the fore, and that the 'old mahogany' has lost none of its flavour."

"Just about the same, sir, I think. Jack," said he, to a lad who was engaged in picking up infinitesimal straws in various parts of the yard, "run round to the house, and tell Mrs. Bond that a gentleman whom she has not seen for many years is coming to dinner. That will set her wondering. You have always been a prime favourite with my missus ever since you brought over that musical box, and gave it to poor Mary. It was a never-ending source of amusement to the poor child during the last few months of her life. Dear me, what a long time ago that is, and now Lucy, that you can remember a little bit of a thing, is engaged to be married."

"Indeed!" said Cis. "I hope she may be very happy."

By this time they had entered the stable.

"Now, Mr. Poynter; or is it 'Captain Poynter' by this time? It ought to be if it isn't."

"Not quite yet," said Cis; "but I expect to get my company almost directly. I should have had my troop a year and a-half ago if I had still been in my old regiment."

"Ah! I was sorry when you told me why you had to exchange. Never mind, though, sir, we have got you home again now, and we

must keep you. Well, I was going to say what sort of horses do you want? I suppose you won't be content unless one or two of them can win a race at the end of the season—a hunter's steeple-chase, I mean."

"You may take your oath I shan't give any less for a horse because he can win me a bit of a chase at the finish," said Cis.

"Thought not. Now, I have got one horse that has not been much schooled yet, but he is a beautifully bred one, by Knight of Kars—Signora, by the Don. Strip that brown 'oss in No. 5, Jetting. He is just your sort; takes a goodish bit of riding, though, at present. I know, however, that he must win you a niceish race, if not this season, at all events next. How many horses do you want, sir?"

"Three or four," replied Cis.

"H'm. Well, I know exactly the horses that I think will suit you. They are a chestnut horse up to fifteen stone—something like a horse he is; a thirteen stone grey horse; a brown horse, clever as a monkey, but not fast; and this horse that you are going to see now—'Matador' I call him."

The first glance at the last named was enough for Cis. He was just his sort to look at, and if he

could only move he inwardly resolved that he, at all events, should make one of the trio or quartette, whichever it was.

The other three having been stripped, and all meeting with his approval, as far as he could judge in the stable, they then adjourned to the house.

"Have these four horses saddled and on the pillar reins by two o'clock," were Mr. Bond's last words to his "head man" as he left the stables.

"Well, this is indeed a pleasure," said Mrs. Bond, as she came forward to welcome Cis Poynter. "I didn't guess it was you for a moment, and I have been wondering who it could be ever since Jack brought the message."

"Why, this can never be Miss Lucy, surely," said Cis, as a neat, comely lass of nineteen summers entered the room.

"It is, indeed, though, Captain Poynter, and I haven't forgotten you a bit. I can remember you coming here before ever you entered the Army, and poor dear Mary used to say that there was nobody like you."

"Yes," said Mrs. Bond, "and who appropriated the photograph that Captain Poynter sent me just after he joined his regiment?"

"Ah, now, mother, don't tell tales out of school."

"Upon my word," said Cis, "it will be my turn to blush in a minute; however, five years of India has painted me such an indelible brick-dust colour that I may do so with impunity, as far as anyone being any the wiser is concerned."

"Well, Lucy always used to say that she would marry a soldier, and she has kept her word," chimed in Mrs. Bond.

"Who may the fortunate man be, Miss Lucy?" said Cis.

"Mr. Bolton. He is the veterinary surgeon of the Dragoon Guards."

"Well, I wish you all the luck in the world, and I sincerely hope that you will ask me to dance at your wedding."

"Only too proud to invite you, Captain," said Mrs. Bond.

Dinner was now announced by a neat-handed Phyllis. Neatness at the Haystack was to the fore in every department, both inside the house and out; it had, in fact, become a regular proverb in the neighbourhood, and frequently, when the height of tidiness was intended to be conveyed to the mind of the hearer, it was "as neat as Bond's stables."

Cleanliness is next to godliness, and tidiness is own sister to cleanliness, in our estimation.

"Your very good health, Captain Poynter," said Mr. Bond, when they had seated themselves round the hospitable board. "The best of champagne is not good enough to drink your health in; but as I don't keep that tap now-a-days, we must do our best in a drop of old October."

"Thanks," said Cis, "a real good substitute too," as he drained his tankard. "I know very well which I should get tired of first; it wouldn't be the beer."

"Do they drink much beer in India, Captain Poynter?" asked his hostess.

"Indeed they do, Mrs. Bond; beer and brandy and soda are the drinks of the country. If a man will only take plenty of exercise in the cool of the day, and stick to the first-named, he will keep as well as he does here. But if one gives way to one's inclination to loll about all day and night, and consume unlimited brandies and sodas, or pegs, as we call them, because each one is supposed to be another peg in one's coffin, then one soon falls a victim to the curse of the country, namely, liver."

"Just one more slice of this mutton—four year old, sir, and home fed."

"No doubt about it," said Cis; "and I must have just an atom more. I shan't be in much form though to lark over your fences after this."

"Oh, we will digest it over a cigar in the office before I ask you to get on to any of the horses."

"Halloa! you've got a lot of new pictures since I was here," said Cis, as he strolled into the office.

"Yes, sir, I have. Lord ——— sent me those after his horse won the Grand National Hunt Race, he bought him from me. Mild or full-flavoured, sir? There are both sorts here."

"Thanks! a mild one for me." And dropping into a chair Cis settled himself for half-an-hour's horse talk.

He always used to say that an hour passed with Bond was worth two with the best book that ever was written. A man who had been all his life with horses, who had made them his study from infancy, freer from prejudice than ninety-nine out of a hundred of the men who devote their lives to his trade, an excellent *raconteur*, his conversation naturally was interesting and instructive in the highest degree, added to which the vein of humour that always ran through his stories made him a most amusing companion.

A word here anent dealers. In our humble

opinion, the least expensive and most satisfactory way of getting a stud of hunters together at short notice is to go to a real big dealer, tell him what you want, and you will get it. You may have to pay for it; you must pay for good ones all the world over. If you pay a stiff price the article will be proportionately good. If you are no judge of a horse be honest enough to say so and place yourself entirely in his hands. You will not repent it. There are of course here and there men of the "Benjamin Buckram" type, but they are few and far between.

We know a man who wrote from Umballah to one of our biggest dealers about two months before his regiment started for home. He said, "Please pick out four thirteen-stone horses that you think will suit me, engage a good man and a lad, and let them be quite fit to go when I get home." The result was that on his arrival at York he had four good horses that had been in strong work ever since his letter was received. He had limited the dealer to £500 for the four. He was able to sit down and send them along at once, instead of casting about all over the country to pick up a team. He sold them at Tattersall's on the Monday after Ascot and made £700 of them. They were, of course, a sound lot, and he

had ridden them straight all through the season. You must bespeak your stalls many months in advance though, my readers, if you would go and do likewise.

"Well, sir," said Mr. Bond, "what do you say if we go and see the horses perform? I see your cigar is nearly done; take another."

"Thanks, no," said Cis.

"I'll tell you what, though," said he, as they emerged from the smoking-room, "it looks uncommonly like frost, doesn't it?"

"It does uncommonly," said Mr. Bond, "and the glass is a great height."

"It will be a terrible sell for me if I get done out of my hunting. However, I am bound to get a good bit up in Westershire when I go back from leave."

"Bring out the grey horse, Jetting," said Mr. Bond.

The field into which they now strolled was twelve acres, with eight fences, judiciously disposed. Nothing big, of course, but quite big enough to show whether a horse knew his business or not. They consisted of hurdles, stiff post and rails, fences with ditches on the take off and landing sides, an artificial water jump, and a low broad bank with ditch on each side.

"Canter him round," said Mr. Bond.

The grey acquitted himself faultlessly.

"Quite a snaffle bridle horse," said Cis, as, after he had himself sent him over the fences, e dismounted. "Barely up to my weight, though."

"Only just, I grant, sir, but his manners are perfect, and look at the quality of his timber below the knee."

"Yes, he is a real nice horse," said Cis, "and his manners are worth a lot. Now for the brown."

He, too, made no mistake, and jumped very big and clean.

"Hardly fast enough for me, I fear," said Cis; "he don't seem to get away. A nice harrier horse, though; and as there is a first-rate pack of harriers where I shall be hunting, I think he will do."

"He is an enormous jumper, sir," said Bond, "and they can't pound you when you're on him. Would you mind getting on to 'Matador' yourself, sir? He is a bit too much of a handful for my man Jetting; he is not so young as he used to be."

"He still looks as nice as ever on a horse, though," said Cis.

"He has ridden some rum uns in his time, sir, I can tell you."

"I dare say he has. What does this horse do, Bond?"

"Well, he is just a half-educated baby, and knows very little of his business yet, and wants to bolt directly he lands over his fences. I don't think he will get away with you, though."

Cis took care that his tackle was all right, and jumped up. The horse cantered pleasantly enough up to the first hurdle, and hopped over it very well. The instant, however, that he landed he gave a reach with his head and tried to pull the reins out of Cis's hands. He was, however, fortunately prepared for him. He tried very hard to get away, but, finding it unavailing, he began to rear and plunge, and play the fool.

Cis, however, sat perfectly still on his back, and talked to him, and after a minute or so he seemed to think better of it, and went quietly round over the fences, jumping them a bit green, but still shaping fairly well. Cis felt that he was a beautiful mover, and evidently had plenty of pace.

"Now, then, for the chestnut, sir," said Mr. Bond, as he dismounted. "I have kept him to

the last, for you would not have looked at any of the others after him."

"He is a beautiful horse," said Cis, "but I fear his price will be far beyond my means."

"Wait till you see him go, sir. You will never go away without him."

"By gad, this is something like a horse," said Cis, as, after Jetting had ridden him round, he dismounted. "I must have a ride."

"Magnificent!" said he, as the chestnut hopped over fence after fence in the perfection of style, swinging along like machinery, just going nicely up to his bit, and, after he had dismounted, standing perfectly still, looking the "beau ideal" of a galloping fifteen-stone hunter, chock full of quality, and with great knees and hocks under him.

"Well, sir, have you ever ridden one like him?"

"I don't think I have," said Cis; "but it is no use, I can't afford to buy him. I couldn't even think about it if I hadn't had a fairish run of luck in India racing."

"Come into the office, and I will tell you what I want for the lot."

So saying, they strolled back to the office, where they found a bright fire burning, and on the table

glasses and bottles containing the best of whiskey, &c.

"Help yourself, please," said Mr. Bond; "you will have a cold drive home, it is beginning to freeze already."

"Thanks," said Cis, and he suited the action to the word.

"Now, sir," said the dealer, "I want two hundred guineas for the chestnut horse, one hundred for Matador (for I know he can win a race at the end of the season), and eighty apiece for the brown and the grey. They are all sound. The chestnut horse is six next foaling, so is the brown, and so is the grey. Matador is coming five."

"See, that makes four hundred and sixty guineas for the lot. Make it pounds and it's a deal," said Cis.

"Very well, sir; we won't haggle about the guineas, but I really asked you the very lowest that I meant to take."

"All right," said Cis, "they are mine, if Marley passes them to-morrow; and if Matador wins me a race this season I will send you a dozen of '47 port."

"Thank you, sir; you know my weakness. Your poor father sent me a dozen of '20 port as a

wedding present, and if your '47 is half as good I shan't grumble."

Having said good-bye to Mrs. Bond and the fair Lucy, Cis, shaking Mr. Bond's hand heartily, jumped into the dog-cart, and was soon bowling along the fast-hardening road on his homeward way.

Chapter V.

King Frost.

The next morning it was not necessary to ask his man when he called him what sort of a morning it was.

"Very hard frost this morning," said that individual, as he entered the room and proceeded to draw the curtains. "Twelve degrees, Thomas says."

"Hang Thomas," was Cis's mental comment.

We don't know whether our readers have ever noticed it, but one's valet does seem to take a delight in announcing, in tones of barely disguised joy, that it is a hard frost, or better still, that there are six inches of snow on the ground. They never own to less than six inches. Is it because "the boots they cease from troubling, and the breeches-tree's at rest?" This, however, was a shooting day, and there was hope for the morrow. As the day wore on, however, it became evident that King Frost meant to stay for a bit, at all events, and as a matter of fact it did freeze for six weeks straight on end.

Here was Cis Poynter with four new horses, all sound and fit to go, eating their heads off.

We have all been through the same mill, and probably shall go through it again, if that is any consolation; hut it was particularly hard lines, after five years of India, that it should take it into its head to serve him like this. Just cussedness, pure cussedness! Luckily, he had plenty of shooting wherewith to beguile the time, or it would indeed have been a poor look-out. At the end of six weeks, though still freezing hard in Essex, he heard from Westershire that the frost gave unmistakeable signs of breaking up; so, though his leave was not up for some few days, he decided to migrate thither with the horses. Three days later saw himself, his men, and horses safely landed at Westerley.

"Well, where do hounds meet to-morrow—will it be fit to hunt?" were his first words after he had interchanged salutations with his mates, who, not being of a sporting turn, had found time very hard to kill during the last seven or eight weeks. They none of them even cared for shooting, or they might have had some fair sport, as the kindly Westershire lairds had called and invited them to dine and sleep, and shoot the coverts.

"Well, we none of us hunt, as you know," said

Kesterman, who commanded the detachment, "but I have noticed that for the last month under the heading of 'Hunting Appointments,' it has always been, 'First open day, the Kennels.' McKernow will know, though. He is a livery stable keeper, and lets out a hunter or two."

After dinner Cis strolled out into the town, and there could be no doubt about the rapidity of the thaw as he wended his way along the quay towards that part of the town inhabited by Mr. McKernow.

The barracks at Westerley, for the benefit of those who have never been there, are built almost on the sands, and are more or less exposed to all the winds that blow; but a sou'wester touches them up more than any other, and it is a fact that one night they were, when just completed, blown completely down. On this occasion it was blowing great guns, and, as all hunting men know, a gale of warm wind will take the bone out of the ground with marvellous rapidity. Inquiry at McKernow's stables revealed the welcome news that hounds would meet at Kennels at eleven o'clock on the following day, McKernow having just received a note by train from Kiltroon to that effect.

"How far off is it?" said Cis.

"Thirteen miles and no more, sir," said his

informant; "and a beautiful road with plenty of grass at the sides."

"Ah, then I can ride it. I have had four horses since the 17th of November and have not yet had a day's hunting on one of them."

"I don't expect they will do very much to-morrow, sir," said McKernow. "I expect they will be most of the day up and down the rides, as Sir Arthur is sure to rattle the home covers well. Foxes are wonderful fond of them, and if they are not constantly disturbed they stick to them very close."

"Many thanks for the information," said Cis. "Good night."

"Thirteen miles," soliloquised he, "it will do Master Matador a lot of good; he is mad fresh, and wants a good long day."

In great spirits was our hero as he walked back to barracks, and what wonder? Was he not at last going once more to participate in the sport of sports? The mere fact of having been so cruelly dealt with by the Clerk of the Weather for the past seven weeks only made him the keener. We grumble at frost, we grumble at wet, we grumble at this, and we grumble at that, but if we never were stopped and always had the best of it, and hounds always ran like blazes, would

hunting have the charms it now has? Certainly not. We must all be agreed on that point; its very uncertainty constitutes its greatest charm, and a series of disappointments only serves as a deliciously *piquante sauce* with which the *bonne bouche* is flavoured.

"What form you are in, old man," said Kesterman. "I declare you seem quite delighted to get back to us."

"And so I am, of course," said Cis.

"Divil a one of him cares about us," said Shorter, or "Corney," as he was always called, who, beneath a roughish exterior, really had the softest of hearts, "it's not us he's glad to see at all; McKernow has told him the hounds are out to-morrow."

"True for you, Corney," said Cis, "but you are a bit hard on me for all that. Don't you see that it is the delightful combination that fetches me so?"

After another hour of the usual ante-room chaff, and after every individual at headquarters had been discussed, the quartette separated for the night.

Chapter VI.

DIFFUGERE NIVES.

The next morning was beautifully mild; the wind had entirely dropped, and Cis Poynter's spirits rose high as he trotted to the meet after having had a slight tiff with Matador, at the conclusion of which the quadruped came off decidedly second best. There is a good deal of excitement in going to meet a new pack of hounds, in a new country, and on a new horse too, and to the best of his belief Cis Poynter did not know by name or sight a single soul in the Westershire country.

"No, there is very little bone in the ground, if any," said he, as he pulled up after cantering a mile along a nice grass siding. "I declare it is quite hot."

Matador had been pulling hard and doing all he knew to get away, and Cis was not sorry to walk quietly along for a bit, as his muscles were by no means in trim after the long frost, coming as it did just atop of the sea voyage. He was walking quietly along when he heard someone coming up

behind him, and he had only just time to shorten his hold on Matador's head before that worthy bounded into the air and tried to bolt incontinently. His rider, however, just managed to stop him, and the newcomer, seeing that he had his hands full, pulled his horse into a walk, and ranged quietly up alongside him.

"Good morning," said he. "I fear I was nearly the cause of a bolt there."

"Don't apologise," said Cis, "he is a young 'un and must learn manners."

"A rare good-looking one at all events," said his new acquaintance. "I presume you come from the Barracks at Westerley."

"Yes," said Cis, "I came back from leave before it was actually up. We landed at Glasgow on the 14th of November and got two months for first leave. I went away at once to Essex, bought four horses, and have not had a ride till to-day. I heard, however, that things looked more like hunting here than they did in the South, and right glad I am that I came."

"Well," said his new friend, "we have never been stopped so long in the memory of man as we have this time, but I fancy we are safe for the rest of the year, and if you are fortunate enough to possess four sound horses you ought to have

plenty of sport before the end of the season. Do you know anybody in the county?"

"Not a soul," said Cis.

"You'll soon know them, I'll guarantee. We are most of us very fond of sport, and are always glad to welcome a sportsman."

"That is a beautiful place on the right there," said Cis.

"Yes, that belongs to Brett. He is a lucky fellow, with thirty thousand a year, and a wife as charming as she is beautiful and a very fine horse-woman, too."

"What is that on the hill there?" said Cis, a few minutes later.

"Oh, that is the Obelisk, a bit of nice country round here; a favourite rendezvous for the Harriers. You must have a day with them, they are a first-rate little pack, and their master is the cheeriest and most genial of men."

With such chat as this the distance to the meet was made wonderfully short, and as they neared the trysting place they passed or were overtaken by various sportsmen all evidently bound on the same errand. As to most of these his new friend enlightened Cis Poynter, and as they turned in at the lodge gate he said, "And now I may as well tell you who I am. My name is Craig, and I live

just outside Westerley. You must come and dine with me to-morrow if you have nothing better to do."

"That I certainly have not," said Cis, "and I shall be only too delighted."

"All right. Belmont is the name of my place, but if we happen to ride home together I can point it out to you. It we miss each other, however, be there at seven."

So saying, he cantered off to change horses.

Cis found that the hounds had already moved off and were drawing the coverts inside the walls, a certain find; and indeed it was more than probable that there would be too many foxes afoot. The hounds had not been three minutes in cover before a whimper, succeeded by one or two deep notes, and then a crash of the music of the spheres proclaimed that the thief of the world was afoot. Nearer and nearer came the cry, and without the least warning out bounced a banging great fox, right under Matador's nose. This was too much for his equanimity, and jumping round before Cis had time to get fair hold of him, he bolted.

Luckily there is lots of room at Ovington for that game. Many and many a good racehorse has been asked the all-important question in the long ride there.

So, finding that the horse had *pro tem.* got clean away with him, Cis sat perfectly still, just steadying him as far as he was able. Now Matador bolted at the bottom of the long ride, which is no less than a mile and a half long, the last half-mile all on the collar and holding to boot on this occasion; at the end of three-quarters of a mile the horse did not want to go any faster; in fact, by the time he began to breast the hill it became evident that he had quite enough of it. Not so, however, his rider.

"Now it is my turn," said he; and catching him by the head, he gave him three or four cuts with the whip, rammed the Latchfords in to some tune, and kept him going to the top of the hill. The instant Cis left off riding the horse stopped as if he had been shot, literally done to a turn was he. Cis jumped off, slackened his girths, and turned his head to the wind.

"Won't want to try that game again to-day, my dandy chap," said he. He then led him quietly about till he had got his wind a bit, and after a short time remounted and rode slowly back to where he had left hounds in such a hurry. A change, however, had come o'er the spirit of the scene. Hounds, horses, men, all had disappeared. He rode up and down the rides, in the vain hope

of discovering somebody, even a foot passenger, from whom he might glean some tidings of their whereabouts. But no; all was still. He then galloped down to the lodge, and the lodge-keeper told him that the fox had jumped the wall about a hundred yards above the gates and crossed the road, that the hounds and field had gone through the gates, and that as far as he could see they were pointing for the sand hills on the other side of the Bankside Steeplechase Course.

"Nothing for it," thought Cis, "but to ride the line in hopes of picking them up again."

This was no difficult task, and setting the now placid Matador going, ere ten minutes had elapsed he saw the field clustered together in a manner which invariably betokens one of two things, either a kill or run to ground. In this case it was the latter.

"They have sent for a terrier," said his informant. "You have not missed very much, and if they bolt him we may have a spin yet. By-the-way, I saw your horse take the law into his own hands; I was close to you. You had not half a chance to catch hold of him."

"I felt a fearful fool, being run away with my very first day in this country."

"Not at all, my dear sir. I dare say better

men than either of us have been in the same predicament ere this; no aspersion on your horsemanship, though, mind you."

"Well, I don't think he will do it again to-day, somehow. He had quite enough of it by the time he reached the top of the hill."

"I can't say that *I* saw the finish of your performance, as the fox crossed the ride, ran a short ring in cover, recrossed it again, and was tallied away across the road. Hounds ran prettily, and marked him to ground here. I suppose you rode the line after us?"

"Yes," said Cis, "and he behaved very well. He jumped all that there was to jump, and plenty to spare."

"A good fault, too, in a young un," said Mr. Hamilton, for such was the name of this the second pleasant acquaintance that Cis had made.

We quite agree with the last named as to jumping big being a good fault in a young 'un. They soon get the better of it, and personally we infinitely prefer going over a country to going through one, besides which the former process is so much more likely to get one to the finish.

"Kindly take your horses a little further away, please, gentlemen," said the Master, "we shall bolt him in a minute."

The fox had got to ground in a stone drain, one of the top slabs of which had been removed, some fifteen yards from the mouth of the drain. The terrier was now put in, and before you could say "Knife," out bolted the wily one. He had a good bit of law, and setting his head straight for Auchengarry, he gave them a very nice seventeen minutes, and was run into in the open just outside a cover on the hill above the house. Matador took a lot of holding in company, but Cis was a fine strong horseman, and though the horse chanced two or three fences, they got to the finish without parting company, and held a good place all the way. They drew again and quickly found, this fox giving them a nice hunting run of forty minutes, just the sort of run in which to school a young one. Ditches on the take off side were evidently a hitherto unopened book to Matador, and twice they got down, though with no more serious result than a crushed hat. This fox was also killed and eaten, after a big ring, within half a mile of where they found him, hounds being thus thoroughly well blooded after their enforced spell of idleness. Cis was leading Matador about when Mr. Hamilton, whose acquaintance he had made earlier in the day, came up and asked him to go down to Auchengarry for a snack, an

invitation which he was by no means loth to accept.

"By the way," said Cis, as they rode down the hill to the house, "who was that middle-aged man in glasses riding a big grey horse?"

"That must have been Lord Westershire," said Mr. Hamilton.

"By gad," said Cis, "I never saw such a devil to jump as that grey horse. We were in the road, hounds had thrown their heads up, and Coxon was casting them; there was a big gate with spikes on the top into the road; somebody was trying to open it, but it did not seem inclined to come. 'All right!' shouted Lord ——what did you say his name was?"

"Westershire."

"Yes, Westershire, the name of the county of course. 'Out of the way, please, I'll give you a lead over,' and he trotted up to it and sailed over into the road with a foot to spare."

"No doubt who it was now," said Mr. Hamilton. "Nothing his lordship likes better than a hunting run when he has plenty of time to look about him and see where he is going. You can't make the fences big enough for him. His nerve is wonderful. Well, here we are. My man will give your horse some gruel and look after him, and we will look after ourselves."

So saying this they entered the house.

A very pretty place was Auchengarry, lying a few hundred yards off the road, just at the foot of a beautifully wooded hill. Here lived Mr. Hamilton and his daughter, and as they ascended the steps Miss Hamilton opened the hall door.

"By-the-way, I don't know your name yet," said Mr. Hamilton.

"Poynter," said Cis.

"Captain or Mr.?"

"Mr. at present," said he.

"Edith, my dear, let me introduce you to Mr. Poynter, of the 150th. He has just come to Westerley."

"Just in time, too, Mr. Poynter," said she, "as this is our first day's hunting for ages."

"I hope it won't be the last," responded he, "for I like what I have seen of the country and its inhabitants immensely."

"I am glad to hear you say that," said she, "for I really thought this morning that you had taken such a dislike to us at first sight that you made up your mind to have nothing to do with us. I certainly saw you turn your back upon the whole field and retire in a great hurry."

This, though said with apparent seriousness, was evidently considered a capital joke by the

young lady, as was evident from the arch way in which she eyed our hero.

"Come, come, Edith," said Mr. Hamilton, "you are hard on Mr. Poynter, and at your first meeting, too,"

"Miss Hamilton is perfectly justified in saying what she does," said Cis. "But though my horse took such an apparent dislike to his surroundings, I can assure you that I by no means shared his feelings. However, I suppose that as first impressions are difficult to efface, I shall in future be looked upon as the 'man who runs away.'"

"Many a true word is spoken in jest," and months after, when thousands of miles from England, the remembrance of these words caused many a bitter pang in his heart.

But we must not anticipate.

"I don't think you look like running away much, somehow," said she.

"Thanks for the compliment," said Cis. "I saw you out hunting, too."

"Yes, I was out, but I did not ride much. Father thought the frost would be hardly out of the ground, and I am much too precious to risk anything; aren't I, daddy dear?"

"Indeed you are, my love."

"It *was* hardish on the north side, too," said Cis. "I know I found it so on one occasion."

"By-the-way, Mr. Poynter," said Mr. Hamilton, "I hope you are none the worse for your two falls. I saw you standing on your head, or rather on your hat, once, and heard that you repeated the performance."

"Not a bit, thanks, though my hat is converted into a 'Gibus'."

While the trio are enjoying their luncheon, we will attempt to describe Miss Hamilton.

It is not exaggeration to say that she was distinctly a beautiful woman, rather over medium height, with brown wavy hair, and the loveliest of dark brown eyes, a nose which just missed being retroussé, and a perfect mouth and chin, with teeth like the proverbial pearls.

"She wore her roses every day," though the jealous ones of her own sex did say that she had too much colour. It was, however, when she spoke or smiled that she showed to greatest advantage; and to add to all this, she was as nice as she looked. Apparently perfectly unconscious of her charms, she was frank and natural with all with whom she came in contact, and she was an universal favourite in Westershire.

"Do you intend to hunt on Saturday at Kere-

loon?" said his host, as he shook his hand at parting.

"I don't mean to miss a day," said Cis, "if I can help it."

"Come to us, then, on Friday. Dine and sleep here. The meet is quite handy for us."

"And please bring a more sociable horse, Mr. Poynter," said his fair hostess.

"That I most certainly will," said he, and so saying, he mounted the now well-behaved Matador and rode away.

As he puffed away at his newly-lighted cigar Cis came to the conclusion that he had, so to speak, fallen on his legs, and that Westershire was not half a bad country to hunt in. It wasn't Leicestershire, of course, but he had been assured by Mr. Craig that there was some very fine country indeed, notably that where they were to meet on Thursday. Then, although a few hours ago a complete stranger to all, he had already made several acquaintances. The Master, Sir Arthur Linton, to whom he had been introduced, and who was always kindness and hospitality itself to soldiers quartered at Westerley, had bid him good-bye most cordially, hoped that he should see him out a good deal, and advised him on no account to miss the meet at Danbridge on Thursday. "We

can show you a bit of nice country there," said he, "and if you have got a good water jumper, ride him." Two men had asked him to shoot on the off days of the following week, so that altogether things looked uncommonly rosy.

"I shall have to keep a big slate hung up in my room," said he, "with a list of engagements and people's names and where they live, or I shall be turning up with a gun and cartridges at some crib where I ought to have taken my breeches and boots, and vice-versâ. Only a fortnight of the shooting season left, though. What a good-looking girl that Miss Hamilton is. I never saw such eyes, and how beautifully her habit fits her. I don't like the way that mare of hers jumps, though, judging from that little place I saw her ride over. She lands desperate short, and I shall tell her father what I think when I know him a bit better. If women do hunt, they ought to ride the best in the world instead of being shoved on to all sorts of weak-necked, short-shouldered brutes. I'll swear that mare's shoulders ain't right. It is no business of mine, though; besides, I never saw the girl in my life till to-day."

Now, Cis Poynter had reached the age of nine-and-twenty with a heart as yet literally untouched by the darts of the amorous god. Many a bonnie

maiden had cast admiring glances on his neat, manly figure with his honest, fresh-coloured English face and crisp, curly brown hair. Not exactly a beauty was Cis, but you no sooner saw him than you instinctively felt that you could trust him to the uttermost limits. His manner to women was very much that of the old school, and though he knew full well that they were not quite all angels, he was never heard to speak lightly of them. He once completely shut up a youngster who had lately joined, and who was speaking almost more than lightly of the sex *in toto*. It was in the ante-room one night after mess, and he was apparently buried in the contents of the evening paper.

"Do you happen to possess a mother and sisters?" said he, looking up from his paper, in which he had been so long engrossed that the youngster in question had probably forgotten his presence.

"Y—yes," stammered the boy, completely at a loss to know what was coming.

"Are you quite sure?" pursued Cis.

"Of course I am," rejoined the lad, as it dawned upon him that he was being drawn.

"Really! Well, I couldn't have believed it possible," was all that Cis said.

It is needless to say that the young man in

question was ever after very careful as to how he spoke of women in Cis Poynter's presence.

"By Jove!" said he, as he chucked the end of his weed away, and set Matador going at a steady trot; "I have never seen anybody in my life that I took such a fancy to at first sight. Wonder whether she will be out on Thursday."

"Well, you certainly are a clinking hack," he said, as he dismounted from Matador's back; "there is nothing like a thorough-bred 'un."

Matador was indeed a good bred one, being by Knight of Kars, from Signorina, by the Don.

"I will ride the chestnut horse on Thursday," said he to his groom. "You can take him on. Tim is a good lad, but he has terribly heavy hands. You must get another as soon as you can."

"Capital boy in the stable, though, sir. He is as old-fashioned as a monkey. I could trust him with these 'ere 'orses for a month."

"Well, if you like to take the horses on yourself, and ride second horse when I have two out, you can please yourself; but he must never get on to this horse's back."

So saying he "sought the seclusion which a bedroom grants," and was very soon enjoying that greatest of luxuries, namely, a hot bath, without which, as a *dénouement*, no hunting day is complete.

Chapter VI.

AND THE MAN THAT IS IN IT.

Thursday came, and a rare scenting day it promised to be, just a sharp catch in the air, the result of a dash of east in the south wind. Cis rode the grey on, and overtook hounds about a couple of miles from the fixture.

"A likely looking sort you have there," said the master, who hunted the lady pack himself, after they had interchanged salutations.

"Yes, but he is not the horse that I intend to ride, he is not so well to be trusted at water as my chestnut horse; and as you advised me to ride a 'water jumper' to-day, I have brought my best horse, and one that will jump anything in reason. Evidently a popular meet," continued he, as they rounded a corner, and saw about ninety or a hundred people awaiting them in a big field close to the road.

"This is *the* most popular meet in the country," said the master. "We have never failed for the last four seasons, to have one or two real good gallops every year from this covert. We have run

a bobtailed fox for two years, and though we have got away on good terms more than once when there has been a rare scent, he has always beaten us hitherto. Let us hope, however, that we may find the gentleman at home to-day. We are bound to find here, as it has not been drawn this season!" So saying, he turned though the gate, and proceeded to exchange his hack for a clean bred brown mare, that was acknowledged to be the best, not only in her owner's stables, but in the whole of Westershire, in addition to which, she was the only animal that had ever been known to jump the "Big Burn" clear from bank to bank.

Five minutes' grace being allowed to the Glasgow contingent, whose train hardly reached Westerley in time to enable them to be punctual, and then a move was made to the cover.

If ever spot looked sure to hold a fox, this did. An oak wood, with a lot of beautiful fern in it, lying on a nice slope facing the south, it would be impossible to imagine anything more inviting. Hold a fox it did, too, for as hounds were thrown in at the top, the Bobtailed 'Un slipped away at the bottom, and if Tim, the first whip, had not just caught a glimpse of him, as he jumped on and off a low wall at the bottom of the field that skirted

the covert, he would have got such a start, as would have handicapped hounds considerably. As it was, however, (instead of hounds having to hunt up to where he had lain from the other end of the covert) Tim's view holloa brought them to the spot in as many seconds as they would otherwise have taken minutes, and capping them on and showing the master, as he galloped up, where he had seen him jump the wall, he proceeded to cheer the tail hounds on to the good old tune of "Get Forrard All! Forr-ard!" Cis Poynter, who had also changed horses, and was now bestriding his chestnut, got away close to the master, and it soon became evident that scent was literally red hot. They could carry a head thirty yards wide, and never had to stoop, over the wall into the road, and out again without a vestige of a hover. The line was, as far as Cis could see in front of him, all grass with biggish flying fences, which seemed to get bigger as they dropped into the vale. However, he had got away on the best of terms, and it would be his own fault if he failed to keep his place now. The chestnut was carrying him superbly, sailing along and chucking his fences behind him without the slightest apparent effort, and as he looked back after landing over a real big 'un, he could count only five men within

hail, and they were not only a couple of hundred yards to the bad, but had the disadvantage of two fields of plough to deal with. On they went, hounds running, if possible, harder than at first. It was now their turn to land into a plough, and uncommon deep it rode; the furrows, however, fortunately ran the way hounds were heading, and steering his horse into the nearest, which luckily was one of the wettest, he splashed along, the master doing ditto in an adjacent furrow.

"You are in luck to-day," shouted the latter, "it is the old customer."

Tim viewed him as he topped the first wall into the road. "His point is at least six miles from here. We have already got hounds almost to ourselves, and it is long odds if anybody else gets over the big brook two miles ahead. If your horse gets over that, and lives to the finish within hail of hounds, you may congratulate yourself on owning a real good one."

"Hold up mare," shouted he, as she pecked badly on landing on to a slippery bit of turf on the north side of a hairy fence, whence the snow had only just taken its departure, consequently leaving the ground hard underneath.

"Good shoulders saved you then," said Cis, as once more they were sailing along side by side,

"Yes; it was a nearish go, wasn't it? She fairly stood on her head twice. It is a treat to ride them when they carry a spare leg or two."

Cis was now in the seventh heaven, and found himself singing, "And the man that is in it, will swear that each minute Was worth all the rest of his life." It does feel like that, doesn't it? Nobody can deny that to be nearly alone with hounds on a real clinker, fit and well, is just about the quintessence of bliss. What liberties you can and do take! How generously he responds! He enjoys it just as much as you do. You are both in perfect accord; your pulses beat in unison; and you feel that what man and horse can do, you twain can accomplish.

There was no doubt about it this time, the pace was a real cracker; already the five men, who had been almost on terms when hounds began to run, had lost a lot of ground. How true it is that a Derby horse cannot catch hounds if they only run straight and really fast; besides which, unless the country is *very* open, the man who rides a stern chase must, to a great extent, ride to the tail instead of to the leading hound. In this instance two had already got down, and the other three had had to bucket to catch hounds and Cis Poynter, for was he not a stranger? and for the

honour of Westershire they could not let him cut them all down. However, he had had a lead of a couple of hundred yards of them at the start, and a bit better horse under him to boot. The last plough had just about settled them, and they came to the conclusion that if they meant to see the finish they must adopt totally different tactics and nurse their horses on the off-chance of a nick or a friendly check. Meanwhile hounds streamed in and out of a narrow lane, by this time running almost mute, and Cis saw at the bottom of the long grass field, into which he had just landed, the unmistakeable gleam of water.

"Yonder's the brook! *bang* in front of us," said the master.

"I see it," said Cis.

"Do you see that tree, leaning over to the other side? I believe the fox runs along it and jumps off it on to the opposite bank. It is a deuce of a drop, but I fancy he must do that, as I viewed him once within a hundred yards of the brook, and made sure of handling him before I had gone another mile, but he made his point in the woods at Blairfield after all, and as the banks of the brook are very steep, and hounds take some time to get across, I think that is how he gets such a long lead again."

They were now within a hundred and fifty yards of the brook. It was a *yawner*, and no mistake—a perfect *grave*, if one did get in. However, the two sat down and raced at it side by side, a few yards to the left of where hounds were struggling in the water.

'Twas a fine sight to see these two *clinkers*, ridden by two fine horsemen, come down at this place. Gradually quickening, they raced at it neck and neck, and rising at the same instant they landed side by side, having cleared it handsomely.

"Thank goodness we are well over that," said the master. "Now it is all up hill to Blairfield; but somehow hounds never seem to run quite so fast after they cross the brook. The land is a bit lighter, and there is a fairish lot of plough."

Hounds certainly did steady a bit, though they kept on at a good holding pace, and were running as though they meant blood.

"By jove! old Duchess has begun to speak," said he (as for the first time a low deep note that Cis had not yet heard, floated pass their ears). "*She* rarely opens her mouth till the fox is sinking."

On and on ran hounds, however, and both horse and mare, though fairly fresh still, bore

undoubted traces of the severity of the pace and the deep going.

"I really think the mare has met her equal, at any rate to-day," said the master.

"I don't know that," said Cis; "but let us each be very thankful that we own such a nailer."

Fence after fence was thrown behind them, and just as they landed on to a cold fallow, Cis spied what looked like a darkish little yellow sheep dog slipping through a gateway at the far end of the field. Hounds came to their noses at the same moment.

"I believe that is the fox," said he; "I saw what looked like a yellowish dog go through the gateway at the far end of the field."

"Put them to me quick," said the master, and with a holloa that must have struck terror to the heart of the fox if he heard it, he set to work to gallop as hard as the mare could leg it. Hounds flew to his holloa, as hounds will when they have confidence in their huntsman, and know that he never lifts them without good reason.

A crack of the whip from Cis, to admonish one or two independent parties that their huntsman knew more than they did, and every hound was

on. The instant he reached the gateway he pulled the mare up short, and hounds racing past him on the grass stopped short, too. A quiver ran through the pack, and old Duchess throwing her tongue, they settled to it again in an instant, and ran like blazes.

"Quite evident you don't often lift your hounds," said Cis, "or they would never have got their heads down again so quickly. By Jove, I view him again; do you see him there slipping up that hedgerow on the hillside?"

"I see him," said the master, "but I wouldn't lift them again for a pony, they are on the grass now, and they shall run from scent to view."

It soon became very evident that the days of this game good fox were numbered. Within two fields was he of the big woodlands, in whose friendly shelter he had so often taken refuge from his relentless pursuers; surely he could struggle home once more. But no, it was not to be. Now, but *one* short field, and the haven is reached. Alas! he can hardly crawl through yon fence! Already hounds are within less than a hundred yards of him, he reels and staggers like a drunken man. Now, Gratitude views him and races out from the body of the pack, with a clear lead of three or four yards, but ere she can reach him he

rolls over dead. Over and over him tumble hounds, their master jumps down and Cis follows suit. Horses, hounds, and men, all have had enough.

"Forty-three minutes since Tim holloaed him away," said Sir Arthur. "What a good one! We can't breed many like him, he never dwelt in covert for a second and never hesitated as to his point. That is the sort of fox *I* like."

"And by the time they have eaten him," said Cis, "you will wish to goodness he had got to ground in some undiggable place."

"I don't know about that. We must think of hounds first, you know; and if they had run this chap much oftener, and he had beaten them, I do believe some of them would have got down on their luck about it. By Jove, hounds have got a wonderful lot of brains, I can tell you. Of course there are lots of fearful fools, just as there are in our line, but some of them can do everything but speak. Have a pull," said he, as he handed Cis his flask. "Good Scotch whiskey, it can't hurt you."

"Thanks," said Cis; "have a weed?"

While this conversation had been going on, the master had been keeping his whip going to keep hounds off the fox which lay at his feet. Whipping out his knife, he now proceeded to per-

form the last obsequies, which in this instance were speedily accomplished as the brush of the now defunct hero was conspicuous by its absence.

"Some infernal trap is responsible for that, I'll bet," said he; "give me my horn, will you. Now then, Loo! Loo! Worry! Worry! Too! Too! Too! Who! Whoop!" And throwing him upin the air, only to fall into the jaws of the blood-thirsty pack, it was soon all over with him.

"What gallops we should have if they were all bobtailed ones," said Cis.

"Lord, they are hard enough to kill as it is now, what with bad scenting days, and sheep dogs, and one thing and another," said Sir Arthur. "About time somebody was turning up; it is a case of us first and the rest nowhere, with a vengeance, isn't it?"

They had just lit their cigars, when the first of the field appeared on the scene.

"Ah, it is Waterton," said he, "he is a capital fellow, but sticks to the roads like blazes. However, if I tell him all about it, it will save me a lot of trouble, as he will spread it like wildfire, and it will save me a lot of bother. I hate to have to go all over a run about twenty times; if the beggars want to know about it, they should be there and judge for themselves."

A man of comparatively few words was Sir Arthur, but a firm friend where he did take a fancy, and no better sportsman ever existed.

"Well so you have killed him at last," said Mr. Waterton; "I suppose it was the old customer, wasn't it?"

"Yes," said Sir Arthur, "unless there are any more of the bobtailed family about."

"What was the time?"

"Forty-three minutes from find to finish, no actual check, lifted them once on fallow; fox rolled over dead in front of them." And turning on his heel, Sir Arthur proceeded to count the hounds.

A short enough description of one of the finest gallops that ever was seen. However, Mr. Waterton knew from past experience, that he had got all the information he was likely to get in that quarter. So turning to Cis Poynter, he congratulated him on having cut all Westershire down in such unmistakeable fashion at the first attempt.

"No credit to me," said Cis, "I owe it to the fortunate circumstance of getting very well away, and sticking to the master all through."

"But you could not do that unless you were exceptionally well mounted," said Mr. Waterton.

"He *is* a good horse," said Cis, "and I am quite sure that he is the only one of my lot that could have lived to the end of the run."

"And you got over the big burn without a mistake, did you?"

"Yes, they both jumped it magnificently," said Sir Arthur; "and Mr. Poynter's horse is as good as, if not better than, the mare at every point of the game. If ever you want to sell that horse, will you give me the refusal?" turning to Cis.

"With pleasure, but I hope that he may carry me for many seasons yet, as we have only just come home, and he is but six years old."

The field now began to appear by twos and threes, all galloping like mad till close to, and then sauntering up, each man trying to look as if he had been handy for some time, and hoping that those who got there before them would not spot their first appearance on the scene, and with a feeling of almost contempt for those who undoubtedly arrived after them. Have you ever taken stock of this bit of fun? it is as good as any play. The excuses are as wonderful as they are numerous. "My fool never brought up my horse till you were nearly out of sight!" "Lost a shoe; I will sack that infernal blacksmith!" "Stopped to help Jackson, he got a nasty fall!"

"Leather broke!" "My brute stuck his toes in, and would not have the brook at any price," &c., Plentiful as flowers in May come the excuses! As regards stopping to help a friend in distress, it is a very beautiful trait in a man's character, none more so; and if your own horse happen to be fresh, or it be the beginning of a run, so beautiful and extraordinary as to become positively phenomenal. Somehow or other the fact of a man's getting down under his horse in a ditch, or even losing him, is a source of delight to many of those who are by this time out of it. We ourselves have seen ten men helping one man and horse, and could not help asking ourselves how many of them would have been there if it had occurred at the first or second fence in the run. We did not, however, say so, as in this instance it was ourselves who had come to grief. As long as we are bang in front, and hounds are really running, we have no time to look who it is that falls, much less pull up to help them.

"Well, Tim, what happened to you?" said the master, as the first whip trotted up just in front of the second whip and the bulk of the field.

"Little 'oss stopped at the fence out of the road, sir! Couldn't get 'im over for ten minutes; it's the long frost as 'as got his back up again.

He was going quite straight at the beginning of the season."

"A rare bit of stuff that," said Sir Arthur to Cis, "hard as nails, but with the temper of a fiend. I thought we should have killed him last season; he was the most obstinate refuser I ever saw, if he took it into his head. I had him out three days a week till we fairly beat him. I hope you gave him fits this time, Tim?"

"Yes, sir; borrowed a cutting whip off of Mr. McKernow, and gave him a terrible thrashing. He refused several more fences, but he went straight enough at the finish."

"Ride him again on Saturday, Tim. You must not let him get the upper hand again."

"Very well, sir," said Tim.

By this time some forty followers of the chase had arrived on the scene, and Cis was quite embarrassed by the congratulations that were showered upon him.

"I'll tell you what," said Mr. Waterton, "you have fairly won the master's heart. I never saw him so cordial, or heard him say so much, to a stranger in my life."

At this juncture, to his great delight, Cis saw Miss Hamilton and her father ride up.

"Here you are," said she, "we have had such

a stern chase, clattering along all the lanes in the country. We missed Mr. Waterton at the start, or we should have been here ages ago. I hear you have cut down all the pride of Westershire. I wonder you dare do such a thing. These good people ride very jealous, I can tell you—jealous as school-girls, I think, is the expression, isn't it? But my experience is that girls can't hold a candle to you men as regards jealousy in the hunting field. However, as you dine and sleep at our house to-morrow, in readiness for Saturday at Kereloon, I shall be able to take care of you, and shall certainly not allow our guest to be molested on that occasion, at all events."

Cis never had a great deal to say to the sex at any time, but to his own great disgust he found himself blushing like a schoolboy, and utterly unable to chaff Miss Hamilton the least bit in return.

"We have a long way to ride home," said she; "I suppose you will go on with the hounds. If you don't, our road and yours are the same for some miles."

Now Cis Poynter was as keen as "they make them." On this occasion, however, he decided that enough was as good as a feast. He had no second horse out, and he came to the con-

clusion that the chestnut had had enough for one day.

We would not for the world suggest that the fact of Miss Hamilton's road and his being identical influenced him in the very smallest degree. We will leave our readers, who are probably much better judges than we are, to form their own opinions. So saying good-bye to Sir Arthur, who shook him most warmly by the hand, he trotted off after Mr. Hamilton and his fair daughter.

"Now," said she, as he ranged up alongside, "tell us all about it. How did you manage to run away from them all? I don't mean in the way you did it on Tuesday, you know."

"She doesn't mean to let you forget that," said Mr. Hamilton.

"I assure you it was just a bit of luck and nothing else," said Cis. "I got away on splendid terms, and stuck close to Sir Arthur Linton. A few others got away well, but some little distance to the right; our line was all grass, and they had two ploughed fields which we escaped. My horse never made a single mistake, and jumped the brook beautifully."

"What a modest man you are;" said she, "I expect, however, that you will have lots to say at

dinner to-night. I believe men always ride very hard after dinner, don't they?"

"I think I may claim to be an exception to that rule, Miss Hamilton. I am quite content to ride my run in the day-time, and if I were ever so anxious to narrate the events of the day I should do so to a very unsympathetic audience; as, though the best fellows in the world, still my brother officers, that is, those that are at Westerley, take but little interest in the sport of sports. They take a certain amount of pride in the fact of one of their own corps going well, but beyond that they do not care a rush."

Cis found himself stealing admiring glances at this charming girl, who chatted away just as naturally and freely as though she had known him for years.

"I wish it was to-morrow instead of to-day, I know," he blurted out, "because—" and then he stopped short, blushing furiously.

"Because what?" said Miss Hamilton, "one day nearer the next day's hunting, I suppose."

"Yes, that's it of course," said he, infinitely relieved.

Now we give our readers credit for knowing full well, that though she came to his rescue in the above manner, yet she knew exactly what was

running through his mind. And what is more, she was by no means displeased thereat. She at once perceived that this man was made of very different material to the ordinary flirtatious young gentlemen with whom she had danced, and played croquet and tennis, and whom she had met any day during the last three years of her life, since she crossed the maiden's rubicon, or, in other words, made her *début*. She knew full well how he would have ended his sentence had he dared to continue it, and saw at a glance that here was no empty compliment such as all pretty women are made the recipients of, till they are heartily sick of them. She found herself getting interested in this new acquaintance. "How well he sits on his horse," said she to herself, "and what nice blue eyes he has! and what curly hair, and how little he seems to think of himself!"

Within five miles of Westerley their roads diverged, and though for the last mile neither of them had said much, yet it would be hard to say which regretted most that the point of separation was reached, and they had to bid each other good-night.

"By the way," said Mr. Hamilton, as they parted, "How do you intend to come to-morrow? because if you have not already made your

arrangements, and it makes no difference, you may as well come by train to Marnoch, the train gets there at 5.50. I have to drive a man, who is going south, to catch it, and I can take you back with me."

"That will suit me down to the ground," said Cis, "I will send my man on quietly with my horse in the afternoon. Good-bye."

"What a nice girl she is!" said Cis, as he rode very slowly away; "I have never met anybody like her in my life. Take your time, old man, there is no hurry," said he, as he threw the reins on his good horse's neck. "I must write to Bond to night, and tell him that you are not only all he said you were, but that you are just the most perfect horse in the world."

What an enormous amount of pleasure one can get out of hunting, the anticipation as we jog to covert on a nice hunting morning, the cheery interchange of salutations, as this or that friend trots up; the last good story,—though these same good stories are responsible for many a bad start. It is a funny thing, but nevertheless true, that men will get up in the middle of the night almost, to reach some favourite fixture, arrive there in plenty of time, take up a good position on a good horse, be as keen as mustard to get away,

and yet in the middle of some good story suddenly wake up to find that hounds are away with a lead of a couple of fields, and running like blazes. They may try all they know to catch them, and unless they are lucky enough to nick them, they might as well be at home for any enjoyment they get out of the gallop. They swear never to be caught napping a second time, but before many days are over the same thing happens again. There are of course scores and scores of men to whom this does not apply. But our readers will agree that there are very many whom this description fits like a glove.

"I am very glad," said Cis to himself, as he rode slowly home, "that she did not guess what I meant when I said I wished it was to-morrow. She would have only thought that I meant to pay her a silly compliment, and she is much too good a sort to like a man any better for it. I wonder whether she is as nice to everybody as she is to me." Ah! my dear Cis! you are indeed a tyro as regards your knowledge of the wiles of the sex, if you think that she didn't read you like a book. However, you have roused feelings in the heart of the fair one, from whom you have just parted, such as no other has yet succeeded in doing, though more than one have tried their luck in

that quarter! "Well! I shall see her again to-morrow, and go hunting with her on Saturday." So saying, he picked up the ribbons, and putting the chestnut into a trot, soon reached barracks, where, as he was the only officer who kept horses, he had a capital stable all to himself.

"How did he carry you, sir?" said his groom as he dismounted.

"Impossible to have been carried better. I am quite sure that he is the best I ever owned!"

"I'm glad of that, sir. They have all done a deal of long trotting, as you know, all through the frost. I thought he might choke a bit, though, if it was very fast."

"No, he didn't. He is a grand winded horse, and has got a great turn of speed I feel sure. We ran very fast, but he was never extended."

"No doubt you have got a good lot, sir, and if we can only keep them sound we shall have a lot of sport."

"Take on the grey to Auchengarry to-morrow. Start directly you have had your dinner. It is two miles beyond Kiltroon; anybody will tell you the way."

While this conversation was going on the chestnut was putting himself outside a bucket of gruel, with evident relish; and no sooner had he

swallowed it than he proceeded to attack his bedding.

"He ain't none the worse for his day, sir, I can see," said Perks, "I do like good doers to look after; them there wishy-washy, delicate feeders is no credit to nobody."

"That's true," said Cis, "and that reminds me that I am ravenous;" so saying, he made tracks for the mess-room, where he proceeded to spoil his dinner to some tune. It is very easy in theory only to take just a mouthful. But when you have been in the saddle for some hours, there must be something radically wrong if you don't feel as if you could demolish an "elephant stuffed with an ostrich," as we once heard a really good fellow express it. Alas, he has joined the ever increasing majority. After all, "eat when you are hungry" isn't half a bad principle to act upon.

Chapter VII.

HABET.

At mess that night, Cis, for the first time in his life, found himself unable to take the least interest in the conversation of his mates, and it was a positive exertion to him to do his share of talking. He felt that he must get away by himself, so after mess he went to the stables, and after seeing that his gee was thoroughly comfortable in his box, with bedding up to the knees and hocks, head loose, ears warm, and bandages on, he strolled out on to the sands. It was a lovely moonlight night, and he sauntered along close to the sea, which was as calm as a lake.

"What the deuce is the matter with me?" said he at last, pulling up short and throwing the end of his cigar into the water. "I can think of nothing but this girl. Can I be in love? *By gad*, I believe I *am!* it's an uncommon rum sensation. Oh, this is all rot! Why, I have only seen her twice. I must knock this nonsense on the head. I can't afford to marry, and besides, I expect she will be very well off some day; I

think she said she had only one brother, and he is on the Australian station."

The foregoing sentence may seem very odd to our readers, as first of all Cis says that he cannot afford to marry, and then goes on to add that he supposes she will have money; we must therefore explain that Cis Poynter had a perfect horror of heiress-hunting. He maintained that no man had any business to ask a woman to marry him unless he could keep her, and he despised a man who married a woman because she was an heiress, above all else. He carried his ideas on this point to a pitch of positive absurdity. Therefore, the fact of Miss Hamilton's being an heiress, or anything like one, was quite enough to make it appear an impossibility in his eyes that he could ever think of her with a view to matrimony.

"I must nip this in the bud, that is quite certain, and what's more, I will," so feeling very determined he strode back to the barracks. He felt awfully down on his luck, though, and before he reached the ante-room he found himself comforting himself with the knowledge that he would see her again on the morrow.

The old story. When that artful little beggar Cupid does take a pot shot at you, and lands you fair, it is ten to one that he brings you to book

before he has done with you. Cis had reached the age of twenty-nine without ever experiencing the faintest flutter. However, it is always the way. Some fellows have a knack of tumbling in and out of love just as easily and naturally as they roll into and out of their tub in a morning; they never get very hard hit. But, on the other hand, when a man has, like Cis Poynter, gone scatheless and heartwhole for so long, it hits very hard indeed when it does come. On entering the anteroom he was greeted with the intelligence that he was in the *Gazette;* and though he had been expecting to see himself there any day for the last six weeks, and was consequently not surprised, still he manifested so very little interest in the fact of his being a full-blown captain that his pals rallied him on his apathy.

"Upon my word," said Kesterman, "if we did not all know how utterly impregnable you are to the attacks of the fair sex, we should pronounce it a case of love. Has some Essex maiden stolen your heart?"

"No, indeed," said Cis.

"Well, we were all saying after dinner that we had never known you so silent."

"Hard day," said Cis, "not been hunting for so long, a gallop rather tires me."

"Yes," chimed in Corney, "why didn't you tell us that you had the best of it, and cut Westershire down to a man?"

"But I didn't!"

"But you did! My servant told me so just now. Young McKernow told him in the town this evening. He said there was not a soul in it but the master and yourself, and that it was the finest run they have had in Westershire for many years."

"Just a bit of luck," said Cis. "Good night, boys; I am off to roost."

"Aren't you going to stand fizz?" shouted the doctor, after him.

"No; not to-night. Lunch to-morrow if you like."

"I meant to lunch out to-morrow," said the doctor, as Cis's footsteps died away down the passage; "but I'll stop at home and drink success to the old chap on his promotion."

"There's something up with him, I'll swear," said Kesterman; "and I believe it's a woman."

"God forbid!" said Corney, in such tragic tones as to send them all off into roars of laughter. "Ah, you may laugh," said he, "but it's an awful thing. Look at Nicholas! There never was such a good chap till he married. He

and I played five or six games of billiards a day. He was the only man in the garrison that I couldn't lick. We played a hundred games once for a fiver; that is to say, that whoever won the most games out of a hundred won the fiver. When we had played ninety-nine games, he had won fifty and I forty-nine. The last was a desperate game. He was ninety-nine and I was ninety-five; he left me a 'pair of breeches,' and I made them. I was telling Mrs. Nicholas about it the first night I was introduced to her. I just described it as I have now. I thought she looked very queer; and when I had finished, instead of being pleased to hear what a good billiard-player her husband was, she just said: 'Will you take me to Captain Nicholas, if you please;' and when I did so, she gave me the stiffest bow you ever saw in your life."

"Capital! Capital!" said Kesterman, when the laughter had somewhat subsided.

"Well, I don't see what there is to laugh at in that. Nicholas came up to me a few minutes afterwards and said, 'I say! What have you been saying to my wife? She thinks you have had too much to drink!' I told him that I had been telling her what a good billiard player he was; he laughed tremendously, too, but I never

could see what there was to laugh at in it. Any way I never got a game hardly with him afterwards, and as to his wife, I just bow to her when I meet her and that is all."

"Precious little of her husband's society would the poor woman get if you and he were to play billiards all day long as you used to," said Kesterman.

"Well, then there's Dillon, and Rabone, and Souter, all married; it's getting something awful," said Corney.

"No doubt it does spoil a regiment completely," said the doctor. "We ought to start a heavy fine like they have in the —— Highlanders. Every youngster that joins signs a paper agreeing to pay a hundred pounds if he marries before he gets his company."

"And a capital plan, too," said Shaw, "*I* vote we start it at once."

"Upon my word it would be a good plan," said Kesterman, "however, I am off to bed."

"Time for us all to do ditto," said Shaw, "I hope to goodness Poynter won't go and get married, though." The trio then sought their respective chambers.

The next evening, as the train drew up at

Marnoch railway station, Cis saw Mr. Hamilton awaiting him with the dog-cart.

"Here you are," said he, "just ask the porter for my fish, will you? Muirhead always sends it by this train."

Cis, his portmanteau, and the fish being safely deposited in the dog-cart, a pleasant drive of twenty minutes landed them at Auchengarry.

"We dine at seven in the winter," said his host, as they entered the house, "come into my room and have a cigarette and a sherry and bitters before you go up to dress. We have nobody to meet you; the Farquhars were coming, but I heard from him this morning, saying that he is threatened with opposition. He is the Conservative member, and though he does not much fear his adversary, still it does not do to underrate anybody, especially in a county where the Liberals are very strong. Try those peach bitters, they have been in the house for years, and I came across them the other day, they have benefited marvellously by keeping."

"First-rate," said Cis. On arriving at his bed-room he threw himself into a comfortable arm-chair in front of the fire. "By jove!" said he, "I feel as nervous as if I were at school again, and just going up for *vivâ voce* before Butler.

What a fool I am! the girl can't eat me, and besides, I have made up my mind to knock all that nonsense on the head.' He then proceeded to get into his evening clothes, "What the deuce is up with the ties to-night?" said he, as he chucked the third failure on the floor, and found that he had but one more left; this, after several attempts, he managed to tie, though by no means to his satisfaction.

For the very first time in his recollection he felt positively nervous as he entered the drawing-room. He felt as if he would rather ride for a certain fall than face the bonnie maiden, who, all smiles, and with a heightened colour, advanced to meet him as he entered the room. The proverbial *mauvais quart d'heure* was fortunately conspicuous by its absence, and ere two minutes had elapsed dinner was announced.

"Will you take my daughter into dinner, Captain Poynter," said his host, and as she laid her hand upon his arm, was it fancy, or did it flutter a bit?

As he unfolded his napkin, and glanced round the cosy and judiciously lighted dining-room, a sense of *bien être* gradually stole over him, which, for the time being, not only completely routed the demon of nervousness, but also scattered

to the winds all his good resolutions of the previous evening.

"She is better looking than ever," thought he.

The *chef* at Auchengarry was acknowledged to be second to none in the county, and, as Cis reseated himself after having bowed his fair hostess out of the dining-room he was fain to confess that he had never eaten a better dinner in better company.

"Just a couple of glasses of '47 port," said Mr. Hamilton. "Take that arm-chair. By the way, I saw your name in the gazette this morning, let me congratulate you. I hope, however, that your promotion will not necessitate any change of quarters."

"Oh, no," said Cis, "I am happy to say that it will not, as the company which I command is one of those now quartered at Westerley. I should indeed be loth to leave here, at all events until the hunting season is over. I am charmed with the country; you could not find a more beautiful line than the one we ran yesterday from Danbridge."

"It is only natural that you should like the country after such a performance as yesterday's. Don't be surprised, though, if you find the Westershire men riding uncommon jealous to-

morrow. They won't let you repeat yesterday's performance in a hurry, if they can help it. Will you have one more glass? No! Well, then, we will get Edith to give us a song, and if you care for pyramids, we will have a game. Will you sing us 'Rothesay Bay,' my dear?" said Mr. Hamilton, as they entered the drawing-room and found Miss Hamilton at the piano.

"She carries her songs in her head," said he to Cis, "so you won't be victimized by having to turn over."

Cis said nothing, but found himself wishing that she did not carry them in her head, as nothing would have suited him so well as to turn over for an indefinite period. However, *faute de mieux*, he made himself comfortable in the recesses of a big arm-chair. He felt sure she sang well, and, even if she had been but a very ordinary performer, he would, under the circumstances, have thought it perfect. "Rothesay Bay" is one of the prettiest Scotch ballads that ever was written, and Edith Hamilton did it ample justice. She had a beautiful voice, and knew how to use it. "Rothesay Bay" exactly suited her style of singing, and Cis Poynter was enraptured with it, so much so that he sat motionless long after she had finished. He did not even say "Thank you.

"I do believe that I have sung Captain Poynter to sleep," said she, as she rose from the piano and peeped at him over the top.

"No, indeed," said he, springing up, as he was brought back to every-day life by the voice of the only woman in the world in his estimation. "I beg your pardon for not thanking you, but it was so beautiful, I did not feel as if I could speak."

"Thank you," said she. "Such a compliment as that is worth all the others that ever were paid to me."

"Well, let us adjourn to the billiard-room," said Mr. Hamilton. "Edith, you will mark for us, won't you?"

"Of course I will, papa."

Now, Cis was reputed one of the best pyramid players in the service, and though he rarely played for money, as he said that he did not care to win his friends' coin, and thought it a poor way of losing his own, still he had, for the credit of the corps, played pretty high on one or two occasions when in India. To-night, however, his play was exceptionally bad. He could have given his host three balls and a handsome beating with ease as a rule, but now, when playing even, he lost four games out of five.

How often is it the case that we shine to least

advantage when in the presence of her whose good opinion alone we value? It is one of the surest signs of love when a man becomes dissatisfied with his personal appearance, and has the greatest difficulty in finding words to keep the conversation going. This was what was the matter with Cis.

Edith Hamilton read him like a book, and when curled up in her pretty pink dressing-gown in front of the fire in her own room, she found her thoughts wandering from her novel, in which she had hitherto been intensely interested, she began to ask herself questions.

"This is only the third time that I have seen him, and yet he is already more to me than any man I have ever known. Can this be love? Oh no, it is impossible, surely!"

However, we, though privileged, will not intrude further on her maiden meditations beyond certifying to the fact that, whatever her thoughts, they were very sweet, and, as we are nothing if not veracious, we must confess that, as she laid her bonnie head on her pillow and composed herself to sleep, we distinctly heard her murmur, "Cecil Poynter to be Captain, vice Charles Bayley, who retires from the service by the sale of his commission. Cecil *is* a pretty name."

Meanwhile, under the same roof, our hero was

suffering from a very severe attack indeed. He was fairly in for it, and he was fain to acknowledge that he could not control his feelings towards this girl who had stolen his heart away at a moment's notice, and that without the slightest apparent effort. He recalled two or three instances, notably the episode of the pretty widow at the Hill Station in India, and had to confess to himself that here was something very different. He sat long thinking, until the fire burning low, he jumped into bed and courted the god of sleep with but poor success. When he did get to sleep it was only to dream of Edith Hamilton.

"Late for breakfast, Captain Poynter," said she, next morning, as he entered the dining-room. "Papa has finished, and so have I, really, but I will take compassion on you and keep you company."

A well made bit of pink, breeches by Hammond, and boots by Peal, the *tout ensemble* left nothing to be desired, and Edith Hamilton, as she stole one or two surreptitious glances at him, experienced all the sensations of the night before, considerably intensified. Cis, too, felt on the best of terms with himself. He had made up his mind as he jumped out of his tub that it was no use fighting against destiny, and somehow he felt that he was

destined some day to make Edith Hamilton his wife. Then again, even supposing things did not turn out well, what was the good of looking too far ahead? Was he not going to ride to the meet with her? *Carpe diem*, said he, and *carpe diem*, say we. It is no use looking too far ahead. How much better it is to be a philosopher and to be thankful for what good things we do get! Whatever is is best. We don't know what is good for us, though we think we do. We are all too much inclined to envy those who are better off than we are, forgetting that for every one who is better there are hundreds worse off.

In this frame of mind was Cis Poynter as he sat down to breakfast—a real good Scotch one, too, and they do thoroughly understand how to put breakfast on the table in the land o' cakes.

"Horses will be round in ten minutes," said Mr. Hamilton, putting his head in at the door. "Ah! Good-morning, Poynter. Edith will look after you. I want to write a letter before we start."

"Couldn't leave me in better hands," said Cis. "Another cup of coffee, please, Miss Hamilton. What are you going to ride to-day?"

"The mare that I rode on Tuesday," said she. "Ah, here they are."

Cis put Edith up, and as she put her hand on his shoulder, and her foot, which was decidedly *bien chaussée*, in his hand, his nerve for one second failed him. This, however, was but momentary, and to deposit her neatly in her saddle, arrange her habit, and put her foot in the stirrup was but the work of an instant.

"Beautifully done," said she, smiling down upon him. "Not the first time by many that you have put a woman up;" and as she said it she found herself wondering whether he had ever made love to any of the numerous women for whom she felt sure he must have performed the same offices.

"No business of mine, though, if he has," thought she, as Cis trotted up alongside. He was riding the grey, and a varmint, wiry-looking customer Mr. Hamilton pronounced him to be. He was uncommonly light-hearted, however, and very much inclined to be all over the place, so that Cis had his hands full, and once he stopped dead short, turned half round, and gave a hoist that would have grassed anyone but a good horseman, catching him, as it did, unawares. Cis, however, never budged an inch.

"What a beautiful rider he is, papa," said Edith, as they rode side by side a few yards behind him.

"He is, indeed," said her father; "and what's more, I think that he is about the very nicest young fellow that I have seen for years. Certainly none of the officers that have been quartered here have pleased me half so much."

"I am *so* glad," was on the tip of Edith's tongue, but for some reason which was best known to herself she suppressed it, and contented herself with saying, "Yes, he does seem nice."

Sly puss! You are simply delighted that your father has taken such a fancy to him.

As the trio neared the trysting place they overtook various acquaintances, and Mr. Hamilton, trotting along with an old friend whom he picked up, left Cis and Edith together. The grey was by this time gradually settling down and becoming more sociable.

"Remember," said Cis, "that you have promised to take great care of me to-day," as they cantered up the Park towards a clump of oaks, beneath which the Master sat with the dog pack clustered round his horse.

"And so I will till we find," said she. "But this mare is not the best of hunters, and jumps very short."

"I came to that conclusion," replied Cis, "the very first fence that I saw her jump, and, what's

more, I made a mental note to speak to your father about it as soon as I knew him a bit better."

"If I only had one like your beautiful chestnut that you rode on Thursday," said she, "I wouldn't care what I rode at."

"Will you ride him? He has perfect manners, and just catches hold enough, and not too much to tire you."

"Oh, but if anything were to happen to him," said she, "I should never forgive myself."

"Well," said Cis, "if your father will let you ride him you shall. I have set my heart on it, and you would not disappoint me, would you?"

"Perhaps some week when you are quite sure that you can spare him, I will."

"Thank you so much," said Cis.

"It is I who ought to say thank you."

Just then a toot of the horn proclaimed that hounds were drawing the laurels, and as a man who can put his sport second must be very hard hit, Cis caught the grey by the head, and shouting, "Come along!" proceeded to gallop down to the far end of the laurels to a gate, through which he had just seen the first whip disappear. When he got there the first sight that greeted him was a fox slipping away across the Park, the first whip

meanwhile sitting perfectly motionless on his horse till the gentleman in red had placed two hundred yards between himself and the covert. As Jorrocks says, "Always count twenty before you holloa." It does not matter whence it comes, a fox's instinct is, directly he hears it, to retrace his steps, provided he thinks he can get back. At last, putting his finger to his ear, he holloaed. "Huic! holloa! huic! holloa!" from the Master, a few notes on the horn, the crack of the second whip's lash, accompanied by "Get forrard all, forrard," brought hounds tumbling out of cover in a trice. So far all had gone well. The fox had taken the best line, hounds were on good terms, and all that was wanted was scent. Alas, that we cannot rely on the presence of that necessary ingredient in the cup. Without it all is flat, stale, and unprofitable; with it all is bliss. Its presence constitutes the hunting field an earthly paradise; its absence does the other thing. In this instance hounds could own it, and that was all. Hoping that things would improve, the Master picked them up and galloped for the place which Tim pointed out as where he last saw the fox. This was some distance from the gates, and as the park was fenced by high iron railings, the field galloped off to get onto the road. Hounds

hit it off where he went through, flashed across the road, and began to pick it out in the field beyond. Sir Arthur, having to gallop up to the gates after he had laid hounds on, was necessarily somewhat behind. The thrusters, that is, the bad scenting day thrusters (for there are two distinct classes of that kind of sportsman) now took advantage of the fortunate combination of the Master's absence and the fact that the small fence out of the road was easily negotiated. When, therefore, Sir Arthur arrived on the scene he found hounds all over the place, with their heads up, and the field bang over the line.

"Hold hard, gentlemen, for goodness' sake! hold hard," shouted he. "Good heavens, where is the man coming to?" as a creature all legs and wings charged through the body of the pack, knocking old Monarch tail over end, and scattering the hounds like autumn leaves in a gale of wind.

"Very sorry," gasped out the individual in question, when his horse had thought fit to stop. "I could not help it. I did not come out to hunt. I didn't mean to come off the road."

"What the devil did you come out for, then?" asked Sir Arthur.

"I came out for air and exercise."

"Go home and blow the bellows, then. You will get plenty of air and exercise at that game."

Having singled out the greatest thruster of the lot, and asked him as a personal favour to keep the others within bounds (a capital plan, we can assure our readers), the Master persevered till at last they were run clean out of scent.

"No luck to-day," said he to Cis; "not an atom of scent. However, we are going to draw the gorse, and are sure to find there."

Hounds had not been two minutes in covert before a brace of foxes broke simultaneously from different corners of the covert. Hounds were laid on to the best line, but scent became, if possible, even worse, and to improve matters it came on to rain hard. Up went coat collars, and the feather-bed sportsmen turned their horses' heads for home. Nothing daunted, the Master persevered, only to be again run clean out of scent.

"Where next, I wonder," thought Cis. "Halloa, where can Miss Hamilton be?"

The lady in question had gone to spend an hour with her dear friend Lady Grenville, who lived at Belleisle, and who, being a confirmed invalid, was entirely dependent on the visits of her friends for any news and for the gossip of the neighbourhood.

"Well, my dear," said her ladyship, as she entered, "come and tell me all about everything. You are like a sunbeam coming into the room."

Very bright and fair did Edith look as she went forward to kiss her friend, with the healthy glow of exercise on her cheek.

"I declare you grow handsomer every day. I wonder who will steal your heart away, my dear," said she, as her arm lingered fondly round Edith's waist.

"Time enough for that," said Edith, though she felt her cheeks burning as she thought of somebody who had only just entered into her life, but since whose arrival on the scene everything had assumed a different aspect.

"Alfred tells me that you had a splendid run on Thursday, and that Sir Arthur and one of the officers of the new regiment had it all to themselves. Have you made the acquaintance of any of the new people yet?"

"Yes," said Edith, who felt herself blushing again to the roots of her hair, "the hero of Thursday, Captain Poynter, stayed at our house last night."

"Is he nice?" said Lady Grenville, eyeing her curiously.

"Papa likes him immensely," said Edith.

"And why don't you, pray?"

"Oh, well, I haven't had time to see much of him yet," answered she.

And then, determined to change the subject, she went off into raptures about some work that lay on the table close to her. After luncheon and an hour's chat with Lady Grenville, Edith bade her adieu, and rode home by herself.

Meanwhile, Sir Arthur, with a field growing small by degrees and beautifully less, kept persevering in his endeavours to show sport, and at last trotted off to a covert about four miles away. As luck would have it, just as they got there the rain ceased and the sun broke through the clouds.

"We may have a gallop after all," said Sir Arthur to Cis, "if scent will only improve. And we shall have plenty of room, too," added he, glancing round at the ten or a dozen ardent votaries of whom the field now consisted.

"Eleu, in there, Eleu, my darlings," said Sir Arthur, throwing hounds in at the top of the covert and slipping through the bridle gate after them.

"Blank, by gad," said Cis, as after drawing every inch of it, hounds came straggling out of covert, and clustering round Sir Arthur's horse,

gazed wistfully up at him, as much as to say, "No luck to-day."

"Where next?" said Cis.

"Well, there is literally nowhere within three miles, and that is in the wrong direction. I fear that we must give it best, unless that bit of rough gorse on the hillside there holds one. We will run them through if you like—it isn't far out of the way."

"This they did, and their perseverance was duly rewarded, for a fox jumped up in the middle of the pack and, after several hair-breadth escapes, slipped through a meuse in the fence, and turned sharp to the right, while hounds poured out with their heads up, as they always do after they have got a view, and raced across the field.

"Get round them quick, Tim," holloaed Sir Arthur, and though Tim promptly obeyed his orders and put them to him like lightning, still their fox had got a real good lead before they settled to the line, Scent had, however, improved in the most marvellous manner, and the little band of keen ones that were left sat down to ride in earnest.

"How jolly it would be if there were never more people than this out hunting," said Sir

Arthur, as Cis and he galloped through a gateway side by side.

"Wouldn't it?" said Cis; and "wouldn't it?" say we all.

The line in this instance was all grass, with nice fair fences. The grey was nipping along beautifully; no nonsense now. As Cis glanced right and left of him he came to the conclusion that the Westershire men could ride a bit, as he saw each picking his own place; on they went for a couple of miles and only two had as yet dropped out of the ranks. The next fence, however, was a real stopper, a big ditch on the take off side, with a bank about three feet six, and on the top a stiff oak rail about a foot above the bank. This precluded the possibility of going on and off.

"The worst fence in Westershire," shouted the Master. "I fancied there was a gate here, but I remember now that it is in the next field, and if we go for it we are bound to lose hounds, as they are bending clean away from it."

Cis threw his heart over, and prepared to follow it. Shaking up the grey, he sat down and sent him at it. A bit of a scramble on the landing side, and they were over. Sir Arthur was not so lucky, as his horse hit the rail hard and fell end over end into the next field. His rider rolled clear, and

got up. Not so the poor horse, however; his neck was broken, and he lay motionless. Cis pulled up as soon as he saw how matters stood.

"Take my horse," said he, jumping off. "Nay, I insist," as Sir Arthur rather demurred; "you are hunting them, and you must be with them."

"Well, if I do, you must get on to Jack's horse. A thousand thanks," and, jumping up, he was soon in pursuit of the rapidly receding pack.

Cis unbuckled the girths of the dead horse, undid his breast-plate, and took off saddle and bridle. He then jumped on to the bank to look for the second whip, and to see what had befallen the others. Only two of them had got over, one of them with a fall; three or four had galloped for the gate, and two were still persistently sending their horses at it, the horses as persistently declining to attempt to negotiate it. One of these was the first whip. He was riding the horse that had refused so badly on Thursday.

"You will never get him over," said Cis. "There is another big ditch on the landing side. Sir Arthur has killed his horse and taken mine; he told me to take Jack's horse."

"Take this one, sir," said Tim.

"No, no; you gallop for the gate, and I will wait till Jack comes."

We will now follow the fortunes of Sir Arthur, who, thanks to a check at a road a few hundred yards farther on, had got fairly with hounds again. Fifteen minutes more, and they ran into him almost under the windows at Auchengarry.

Miss Hamilton, who had just changed her habit, ran out, having first taken the precaution to set the servants to work to get some luncheon.

"We have had a ripping thirty-three minutes," said Sir Arthur.

"And you have had it all to yourself, too," said she; "Not even Captain Poynter to divide the honours with you this time."

"I haven't got Captain Poynter, I grant, but I have got his horse."

"Where is the owner?" asked Edith, her heart beating, and her colour coming and going, fearing that something might have happened to Cis.

"I broke my horse's neck, and he insisted on my taking his. I don't know another man who would have done it. Fate doesn't often send us men like him to hunt in our country. He is such a good man to hounds, too."

This was all very sweet to Edith's ears.

"Well, come in and have some lunch. Papa has had his, and I lunched with Lady Grenville, but it is all ready for you."

"And I am sure that I am quite ready for luncheon," said he; "but I must shut the hounds up first, as I am minus both my whips."

"Here comes one of them, I think," said Edith.

"Yes, it is Tim," said Sir Arthur.

"Well, Tim, what happened to you again to-day? I don't often slip you two days in succession."

"Couldn't get him over the big fence where you broke the poor old 'oss's neck, sir."

"Have you seen anything of Captain Poynter?"

"He is just behind, sir."

"All right. Then we will go in to luncheon, if you have no objection, Miss Hamilton."

Edith would have given her eyes to wait until Cis came up. However, consoling herself with the reflection that he would be there directly, she entered the house and did the honours of the luncheon table. She had not long to wait ere Cis made his appearance, as before the the hungry Master had got through his first innings at the beef, Cis entered the room.

"Turned up again, you see, like a bad shilling, Miss Hamilton. You took such care of me last night that I felt obliged to come back again."

"Very glad to see you, Captain Poynter," and

somehow she could not help infusing more warmth into her manner than was perhaps absolutely necessary.

"I cannot thank you enough," said Sir Arthur, rising from his seat and grasping his hand. "I don't know another man who would have done what you did, and what a grand hunter the horse is! He never made half a mistake of any kind or description. How on earth do you pick up such clinkers?"

"I buy them all from Bond, the dealer; he is an old friend, and has never yet sold me a bad one. I am sure that he would rather give me a good one than sell me a bad one. However, I am ravenous, and if Miss Hamilton will allow me, I will attack that delicious round of beef."

"Cut me a bit more into the bargain," said Sir Arthur, "while you are at it, and I will tell you what we did after we parted—or rather, after I left you horseless. Adamson, Coates, and myself were the only three with hounds from that beastly fence. Poor old Chanticleer; he was a long way from being my best horse, but he *was* honest; thank goodness, he did not suffer an instant's pain. Well, we ran right through a long narrow covert called 'the Kernels'—you don't know it, of

course. I galloped like blazes to try for a view at the far end, as I thought he might have dwelt a second or two, and I was very glad that I did, as I spotted him sinking the hill into the valley beyond. At that moment hounds evidently disturbed a fresh fox in covert. I holloaed to Adamson and Coates to put them to me, and blew my horn lustily. Adamson stopped them and brought them on. Coates I never saw again. I got them on to the line, and they began to run again like blazes. Adamson lamed his gee jumping into the lane, and I came on solus and killed him almost under the windows, thirty-three minutes from find to finish."

As the two friends, for so we may now call them, having bid adieu to Miss Hamilton, jogged away, Cis could not help wishing that hounds would continue for the rest of the season to run into their foxes at least within measurable distance of Auchengarry.

"By the way," said Sir Arthur, "what did you do with Jack when you took his horse?" He had changed on to his second whip's mount.

"Oh, he walked up to a farm close by, and said that McFarlane, who was a tenant of yours, would lend him something to ride home on."

A mile further on, and they parted, but not before Cis had promised to make use of the Castle stables for his horse, and the house for himself on all occasions when it suited him.

Chapter IX.

EHEU FUGACES.

The season of 187— and 7— slipped away as they always do, the only difference between the last season and the present one being, that the present one always seems to go a good bit faster than ever did season yet. As regards this particular season in Westershire, it was well-nigh perfection. Cis was carried right well. They rarely failed to have a good gallop; scent was wonderful, Matador improved immensely, and gave promise of winning a useful race before the end of the steeplechase season. Miss Hamilton had ridden the chestnut horse twice, and he had carried her superbly. Cis was over head and ears in love with her, and had quite made up his mind to try his luck, when one morning in March he missed her from her accustomed place at her father's side.

"Good morning, Poynter; I see that you wonder what can have happened to my girl. I am sorry to say that her hunting is over so far as this season is concerned. She has gone to nurse her aunt,

who is very ill, and who will, I fear, not get better. She is a fussy old maid, and no one can manage her like Edith."

This was a real facer for Cis; he had never till now, actually realized how all the happiness of his life depended on this girl's presence. To think that he might perhaps not set eyes on her for months well-nigh drove him to distraction. He was utterly reckless that day, and rode the brown horse as though he had a spare neck in each pocket.

"I think Poynter goes harder than ever," said one man, as Cis sailed in and out of the railway, over locked iron gates, and was rewarded by having the hounds to himself for ten minutes. (It is not often that happens, though, as our readers will agree. As a rule, hounds turn short back, or throw their heads up, or the fox goes to ground in the next field.) As Cis Poynter rode home that evening his heart was very heavy.

"How on earth can I exist without her?" said he; "I have often laughed at others in a similar plight, but if they suffered half as much as I do I am sorry for them." "Nothing for it but hope for the best," said he at last, pulling himself together. "All things come to him who waits;" and so saying he trotted briskly on, and was soon

in close confab with his faithful groom anent a small splint which the grey had just put up. Bar this, all his horses had not only carried him wondrous well, but had kept sound.

Well, as we said just now, the season was nearly over. Hounds had already, on more than one occasion, been whipped off, as it did not at all accord with the domestic arrangements of the Reynard family that the ladies of the various establishments should be bustled under existing circumstances. The last card had at last been issued, and the ominous words, "To finish the season," appeared once more. To the young, those on the threshold of life, it matters but little, but to those of advancing years it is just one more toll of the bell, that, as time rolls on, shall ring at such shortening intervals that we cannot credit the fact of twelve months having elapsed since last we heard its note. Miss Hamilton was still away, and had it not been that Cis had been fortunate enough to make the acquaintance of Lady Grenville, with whom he had become an especial favourite, and from whom he heard frequent tidings of the absent one, he would indeed have fared ill. Lady Grenville very soon saw how the land lay; she had been quite sure as to Edith's feelings before her departure, and the transparent

subterfuges resorted to by Cis in order to bring her on the tapis would have been apparent to anyone much more dense than Lady Grenville. She was as we have said before, very fond of Edith, and as she came to know Cis better, she determined that she would do all that lay in her power to fan the flame, and bring these two together. Here was a man whom she considered in every way worthy of the girl whom she loved as her own daughter. She told Edith in her letters that Cis was often there, and always took care to send some message or quote something that he had said, so that no possible doubt should exist in Edith's mind as to the state of his feelings for her. She in return generally made some allusion to him. Had he cut all Westershire down again? How were his horses, especially the chestnut, whom she had christened Magnum Bonum, and as he was both a big horse and a real good one too, the name was very appropriate.

The Westershire Hunt Chases were due in a week or ten days, and Cis had had Matador in regular work for the last three weeks. He had thought of running Magnum Bonum, but he was such a magnificent hunter that he decided not to risk spoiling him, especially as he had visions of a certain lovely woman, who might possibly be

his property then, sailing along over Westershire on him. The programme contained two Hunters' Steeplechases, one for horses that had been regularly and fairly hunted with the Westershire hounds, and the other for horses the property of farmers residing within the limits of the hunt.

Cis used to give Matador his work on the farm of one Mr. Howarth, about three-and-a-half miles from Westerley. He always rode him himself in his fast work, as now he was in really good trim he pulled a lot. Howarth was a perfect specimen of a genial Scotch sporting farmer, and we can assure our readers that Westershire contains many most excellent fellows of that class. Howarth was the possessor of a nice thick-set little chestnut mare, with some capital shoulders, a very quick fencer, who went in good form and stayed, and could slip along a good bit faster than her appearance gave token of. To win the Farmers' Cup with this mare was the summit of his ambition. Cis used to let him work her alongside Matador, and about a week before the meeting he gave him a rough gallop. Though she could nothing like extend Matador, still she acquitted herself quite well enough to make Cis feel confident that if Howarth would only sit still and let her run her own race, she would

just about win the Farmers' Cup. Dear old Howarth, however, used to sit like a sack of potatoes on her back, and Cis tried to persuade him to stand up in his stirrups. He took a lot of trouble to acquire this accomplishment, and as the day approached he made great improvement in his equitation. He was uncommonly proud, too, of being able to ride "jockey fashion, like the Captain," as he expressed it. In fact, he actually came to the conclusion that it would be just as great a triumph if he could gallop the two-and-a-half miles, which was the distance of the farmers' race, without once sitting down in the saddle, as it would be to win the race itself. As the day approached, he talked and thought so much about the race that he nearly went off his head about it; and not only did he back the mare to beat each and several of her opponents, for half-crowns and glasses of whisky, but also backed himself heavily to accomplish the distance without once sitting down in the saddle.

Chapter X.

"BETWEEN THE FLAGS."

The eventful day arrived, and as the clerk of the weather was in the most amiable of moods, sporting Westershire turned out to a man. There are few better steeplechase courses in the kingdom than Bankside, and so highly is it thought of that the Grand National Hunt have on more than one occasion made it their rendezvous for the moveable feast which they annually hold.

It was mostly green side up with fair fences, which, though not actually very big, still took a good bit of doing. The card contained six items, namely, an Open Hurdle Race, the Westershire Open Steeplechase, a Selling Steeplechase, Hunters' Steeplechase Plate, Farmers' Cup, and a match between two well-known members of the Hunt. The racing was first-rate, and the big race was notable for a fine bit of horsemanship on the part of Bob Daniels, who broke a leather at the second fence, and who, though his horse pecked badly three fences from home, still managed to get him there a neck to the good,

after a desperate set-to all the way up the straight. The next race on the card was the one in which Matador was to run, and Howarth, who was very much excited, "set the market," as racing men say, by offering to back him against the field, individually or collectively. He really did accept £30 to £10 from a prominent bookmaker, and as it was the horse's maiden essay over a country, and there were eight competitors, the price was absurdly short. However, we all know what a flock of sheep the racing public are, and Matador was backed in earnest, until six to four was all that could be obtained against him.

The race needs but little description. Cis found that the horse was as fit as the proverbial fiddle, and moreover knew that he fenced much more temperately when he was in front, as he was apt to jump wildly and chance his fences a good deal when there was anything before him. So jumping off at score he let him sail along at a good pace, albeit going well within himself. The first three fields were all sound grass, and as he jumped into the fourth, a plough, he had ten or twelve lengths lead, the others all thinking that he would come back to them, and so he did, but only through the plough. He steadied his horse a lot through this field, with the result that the

others just got to his quarters at the next fence. Slipping away again for the next two fields he repeated the same tactics at the next plough. Two of his opponents had come to grief at the brook in the bottom, (none of your artificial affairs, but a genuine, steep banked one), two others had refused, and as he looked round after landing on the course proper, half a mile from home, with only two hurdles to jump, he came to the conclusion that it was all over. Two or three had a cut at him below the last hurdle, but he had only to sit still and sail home a comfortable winner by three lengths, which might have been increased *ad libitum*, had he so willed. Howarth positively embraced him.

"Eh, Capen! I won 'tharety poon,' an ar'll pit it every bawbee on the wee mare, and ar'll no set doon a yaird o' the destance."

Cis had to take a pull at a bottle which the enthusiast produced, or he would never have been satisfied.

"Now, Howarth," said he, "your race is next, pull yourself together, don't excite yourself and you'll win. Have you weighed out?"

"No!"

"Come along then, sharp."

Cis shepherded our friend most carefully, and

gave him a leg up on to the little mare, who was very much cooler, and more to be depended upon than her rider. There were six runners coloured on the card, and although in one or two instances their hopes were of the forlornest, they all faced the starter, having satisfied their owners by leaving the trees and fences on their respective training grounds literally standing still.

"Now don't get flurried, and don't let any horse get more than ten lengths from you at any time. I will be at the last hurdle but one, and will tell you what to do."

Down went the flag, and away they went. Howarth standing well up in his stirrups, and, as he rode very short, disclosing a big slice of daylight. The little mare was a beautiful mount, and lay a couple of lengths behind Simpleton, which was the only horse that Howarth feared; in fact, Cis had told him that he could beat all the others. Down they came at the brook, which was a few yards below the place jumped by the horses in the other races, and not so wide by a yard at least. Over this they all landed without a mistake, and then Simpleton began to increase the pace. Howarth followed and stuck religiously to him. He was delighted at his ability to stand up so comfortably in his stirrups, and began to

think he should win. Something fell almost alongside him at the next fence, but he dare not turn his head to look what it was, for fear of losing his balance, and coming whop on to the saddle. On they came over the last fence into the course. Simpleton still leading a length-and-a-half up to where Cis stood, but not going so strong as the mare. "Sit down now, Howarth," shouted Cis, as he passed him, "shove the spurs in, and send her along." But he might as well have shouted to the moon. Howarth's one idea was to gallop the course without sitting down, and so hanging on like grim death to the mare's head as he began to roll about from fatigue, he effectually prevented her from winning. It was a lovely sight to see him, with his eyes starting out of his head, the reins all in a heap, catching the mare so short by the head that she had no chance to extend herself, his ill-fitting jacket swelling out like a balloon behind him. Simpleton of course won easily by three lengths, though the verdict ought to have been just as far in favour of the mare. The moment the mare stopped, Howarth rolled off all of a heap; he was decidedly the most beat of the two. However he was perfectly happy; he had achieved the summit of his ambition, and the loss of the race did not the

least affect him, inasmuch as he had not sat down during the race. Meeting Sir Arthur and some of the ladies of the Castle Party crossing the course to their drag a few minutes after the race, he rushed wildly up, "Twa mile and a hauf, Sir Arthur, and ma breeks niver touchit the sadle. It was gran'!"

"Yes, but my dear Howarth, if you had only sat down and let the mare have her head even in the last hundred yards, she must have won."

"Sir Arthur, Sir, did ye no notice Capen Poynter? he didna set doon, and he won the race vera easy." It was useless for anybody to attempt to combat such absurd arguments as these, and to this day, if ever the conversation turns upon steeplechasing, Howarth never forgets to tell how he rode "the twa mile and a hauf round Barnkside and his breeks never touchit the sadle."

Chapter XI.

BOULEVERSEMENT.

The Westershire Hunt Steeplechases were a thing of the past; hunting was all over; Cis had reluctantly relegated his hunting kit, accompanied by camphor and pepper, to the recesses of a tin box. He had decided to sell the brown horse, and the grey, too, provided he got a fair figure for him, for brilliant as the little horse was, he was fain to acknowledge that he was not up to his weight, which was inclined to increase a few more pounds than he liked. This was, we fear, rather the natural result of Westershire hospitality. We speak from personal experience. It was our privilege to be quartered at Westerley, and we can unhesitatingly assert that Westershire hospitality knows no bounds. They are a real sporting lot, and we don't think that a man in whose composition the ingredient of sport was conspicuous by its absence would find himself quite in his element. Oh, that we could put the clock back nineteen years. *Eheu fugaces!* What is the superlative of *fugaces?* because that is how the years go with us

now-a-days. 'Tis nineteen years since we were quartered there, and seems but as many months. Well, Cis Poynter knew full well that it was no use whatever to send up one or two horses to Tattersall's, so he wrote at once for stalls for half-a-dozen, and knowing that he had no chance of getting them on anything like a good Monday, he picked the Thursday in the off week after the Derby. He was well known throughout the service as a good man to hounds, and he was also one of those men whose word was known to be his bond. It was only natural that men should bid for his horses with confidence, after having asked him as to their capabilities. Nobody better realised than he did that condition is cumulative, and though he of course docked his horses of a considerable portion of their corn, and made an arrangement with McKernow by which they were daily supplied with green stuff, still they did their couple of hours walking on the sands every morning of their lives, a considerable portion of the two hours being spent up to their knees in the water. Had we been writing this book twenty years ago we should have had much to say on our ideas of the proper way of summering hunters, but now that all men who hunt in anything like galloping countries, where hounds run as fast as they do now-a-days, have

learnt that condition is a *sine qua non*, and that the only royal road is never to let their horses out of condition, any suggestions on that score are quite unnecessary.

"In the spring the young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love;" and in this particular spring this young man's fancy turned by no means lightly to his love. The friendship between himself and Lady Grenville was by this time a very firm one, and she looked forward to his visits with the greatest pleasure.

"I think we shall have her back again soon," said she, one day, "as, from what I hear, her poor aunt cannot last many days."

Cis was by no means a bad-hearted man, indeed, as men go, he was a very unselfish one, and yet he could not hear with unalloyed grief the news of the impending decease of the poor lady in question. In fact, somehow or other, he was in the seventh heaven of delight as he rode home that night.

The weeks rolled on, and Cis got a fortnight's leave for the Derby and Ascot. His horses were looking beautiful, and leaving word for them to start from Westerley on the Monday morning after the Derby, he took his departure for the scene of action. He promised to keep Lady Grenville *au*

courant of all that occurred, and she in her turn had said that she would let him know Edith Hamilton's movements.

London is always the same; the same pieces, with but slight variations, are played every year; the players alter so gradually and imperceptibly that, unless your attention is particularly drawn to the fact that but very few of the company that graced the boards twenty years ago are still to the fore, you do not notice the change. Cis, who for the last five years had hardly spent a day in town, felt, ere he had been half-an-hour in the smoking-room of the club, as though he had never left it. Men may go round the world, have the most hair-breadth 'scapes, do all sorts of things, in fact, and return to find that half their acquaintance do not know that they have ever been out of England, and the other half greet them as though they had parted but yesterday. Cis was deservedly a very popular man in the service, and as clubland swarms with "soger" officers during this fort-night of the year, he naturally found himself inundated with invitations to dine at this club or that. Himself a member of the "In and Out," a charming club, and for situation unequalled, he preferred to dine there the night that he arrived in town.

"Your letters, sir," said the hall-porter, as he entered the club after the theatre.

Recognising among them one from Lady Grenville, it is needless to say that that first claimed his attention. It ran as follows:—

"Dear Captain Poynter,—I hasten to tell you a piece of news that may possibly (! !) interest you. Edith Hamilton's aunt died last week, and she and her father will pass through London on their way home from Devonshire. I have had a long letter from Edith, and she is most anxious to get home at once. She says they will not be more than one night in London. Circumstances, however, alter cases, and I fancy that if you were to call and represent to Mr. Hamilton that, although they are not going out at present, you would like him to stay up for a day or two and dine with you and see the horses sold, it is just possible that he might be able to persuade Edith to stay. Now, this is very self-denying of me, isn't it? as of course I am pining for a peep at my pet. Write to me as soon as you have met them; tell me all the news, how she looks, and whether she seems glad to see you. There, I won't teaze you any more.

"Ever yours sincerely,

"MARION GRENVILLE."

"By the way, a woman's letter is always incomplete without a postscript, and mine would certainly be so, as I haven't told you where to call. Batt's Hotel, Dover Street, will find them."

Needless to say, the contents of this letter delighted Cis not a little; that he was to see the object of his adoration, within a few days at furthest, seemed too good to be true.

"By Jove, I'll not remain in suspense an hour," said he; "and if she says 'Yes,' we will go back to Westershire together," &c., &c.

What castles did he build! However, he had promised to take a cue at pool; so he adjourned to the billiard-room. Here his high spirits attracted the attention of more than one of his pals.

"It is easy to see that you have a good book on to-morrow's race," said Travers of the Horse Gunners, as he strolled round the table, pocketing divers shillings which had fallen to his unerring aim.

"The best I ever had," said Cis.

"How do you stand?"

"Well, I literally have not got one single bet, so I can't lose, and hitherto the Derby has been by no means a successful medium of speculation with me."

We may as well inform our readers that it was a Derby, and that none other than the disastrous one of 1867, when Hermit, who started at fifty to one, beat Vauban and Marksman, who were respectively at six to four and two to one, that had necessitated Cis Poynter's exchange from a hussar regiment to an infantry corps quartered in India. The morrow came, and as Cis pored over his card at breakfast in his rooms in Duke Street he found himself contrasting his present feelings with those of just six Derbies ago. He had passed the verdant stage when he was miserable unless he had a bet on every race, whether he knew anything or not.

We wonder when, if ever, backers will awake to the fact that this system of betting, whether they know or are not in the know, must terminate in one way only. Book-making, if conducted on strictly business principles, is bound to pay. Backing, promiscuous backing, must inevitably result in loss. Fortunately for the layers, the noble army of backers and owners is daily recruited. It is very flattering to the pride of the newly-fledged youngster (who, after his long minority, comes into his half-million, and who promptly announces his intention of getting together a string of horses) to see in the sporting

papers some such notice as the following:—"We hail with genuine pleasure the accession to the ranks of horse owners of Mr. ——. The gentleman in question, whose income is enormous, has already purchased So-and-so and So-and-so; and we are informed that negotiations are pending which will probably result in the purchase of So-and-so, a prominent favourite for next year's Derby. We also hear that the well-known and deservedly-respected trainer —— will have charge of Mr. So-and-so's horses."

The army of layers includes in its ranks, of course, all sorts. It is an undeniable fact that no larger-hearted class of men exist, and they are always ready to extend a helping hand to those with whom fate has dealt hardly. There are, of course, exceptions in this as in all other cases. Very good company, too, are some of them, and many is the really clever *mot* that has been known to emanate from them. That their lingo, too, savours somewhat more of the powerful than the elegant we do not for an instant deny. We are reminded of a good story in connection with one of the fraternity who hailed from the midland counties. He was a Town Councillor, and a great success I believe he was in that capacity. He was asked one day for a subscription to-

wards the cost of building a wall round a new cemetery.

"No," said he. "I shanna soobscroibe ter no wall."

"And may I ask why?" queried the gentleman who was canvassing for subscriptions.

"Whoy? Whoy them beggars as is in canna get aout, and Oim sure as them beggars as is aout doesna' want to get in."

This was an irrefutable argument, and the gentleman was compelled to retire minus a subscription.

Yet another while we are on the subject. The hero of our last story had just got home from a meeting at Derby, and as it had been a hot and dusty day, his first performance was to have a hot bath. A shy young curate happened to call to ask for a subscription to a new organ. He was received by Mrs. ——, and having made known his errand, she said, "Mr. —— is upstairs in the bath-room, but I will tell him."

So, going to the bottom of the staircase, she called out, "Billie! Billie!"

"Holloa!" said he, opening the door. "What's oop?"

"Mr. Simpson, the clergyman, is here. He wants us to subscribe to the new organ in St. Swithyn's Church."

Now Billie had had a real good day, and was just out of his tub, and consequently in capital form. So he shouted out, "Give him a pony!"

"Oh, but Mr. ——," said the youthful clergyman, who had accompanied Mrs. —— to the bottom of the stairs, "I don't want you to give me a little horse, I want a little money."

"Silly beggar," said Billie, "silly beggar, gi'e him a fiver, missus."

Cis went down by train with two or three others, and enjoyed his day's racing none the less despite his not having a single wager of any sort or description. The following day he called at Batt's Hotel, and was told that the Hamiltons were expected home on Saturday afternoon. At half-past five on that day he presented himself, and was told that they had arrived. As he followed the waiter upstairs, he experienced the old sensation. He was intensely nervous, and felt more than half inclined to cut and run. Hardening his heart, however, he entered the room, and was positively relieved to find only Mr. Hamilton there, and yet he had been hoping for the last three days that when they did meet he might have her all to himself.

"How are you, my dear Poynter?" said Mr. Hamilton. "Edith and I have just arrived.

Awfully glad to see you. How on earth did you know that we were here ?"

"Lady Grenville told me that you were coming up for one night, and I called, hoping that I might persuade you to stay up for a day or two, and dine at the club with me. My horses go up at Tattersall's on Thursday."

"So I see. I got the *Field* at Bath, and saw the advertisement. I see they are all going up."

"Yes, but I only intend to sell two, the brown horse and the grey. The brown is not fast enough, though he is such a grand fencer, and the grey, brilliant as he is, is not up to my weight. Money cannot part Magnum Bonum and myself, and Matador will have a good look in at the Grand Military next year, if he has any luck."

At this moment Edith entered the room. Very charming she looked as she came to meet him. Of course, she was completely at her ease ; they always are !

Cis stammered out something to the effect that he was delighted to see her again. He felt, however, strongly inclined to pick up his hat and make a bolt of it.

"And how did you leave Lady Grenville ?" said she. "Isn't she a dear ?"

Cis gradually pulled himself together, and they

chatted away for half-an-hour, at the end of which time things were quite on the old footing. Cis persuaded Mr. Hamilton to dine with him at the Club the following evening, as Edith was going to spend the whole of the next day with an old schoolfellow. He went away with the lightest of hearts, and quite determined to set all doubts, if any existed, at rest on the first opportunity.

Edith, too, was very happy, She knew that, though as yet he had not spoken, he loved her. His very embarrassment, when they met, was the surest sign that his feelings were unaltered.

A very pleasant evening was that spent by Cis and Mr. Hamilton at the former's Club. The acquaintanceship between the two men had ripened into a genuine friendship. Indeed, Mr. Hamilton was as fond of Cis as though he had been his own son.

Monday night saw the horses safely landed at Tattersall's, and on Tuesday the Hamiltons went with him to have a look at them. He had picked up a neat pair of roan cobs with niceish action; one he bought from our old friend Howarth, and the other from a sporting innkeeper. He put them together, and made a smart pair of them. These completed the half-dozen, and very well they all looked. Edith, it is needless to say, made

a great fuss of Magnum Bonum, and Cis made a mental resolution that, if his suit did but prosper, she should ride him all next season. It was arranged that they should all go down to Westershire together on the Friday.

As Cis and Sir Arthur sat over their claret after dinner that night, the conversation naturally turned on the past season, and by an easy transition the Hamiltons came upon the tapis.

"By-the-way," said Sir Arthur, "have you seen Edith Hamilton? They are in town."

"Oh, yes," said Cis. "We go down on Friday together."

"I suppose you know that she is a great heiress now," added Sir Arthur.

"No," said Cis, "I did not." His heart stood still.

"Rather a romantic story it is. Her aunt, her mother's sister, was, as a girl, engaged to a man who had a place in Gloucestershire. He had a frightful fall about a month before they were to have been married. He lived but forty-eight hours after it; time, though, to send for her and make a will leaving her four thousand a year. She never married, and Edith Hamilton has inherited every farthing of her money."

How Cis got through the next half-hour he

never knew. It seemed as if his own voice sounded miles away. At last, to his great relief, Sir Arthur lighted a fresh cigar, and bade him good-night. He had his own ideas as to the relations which might exist between Cis and Edith, and sincerely hoped that they would make a match of it.

Cis went straight to the lavatory, and plunged his head into a basin of cold water. Then he sat down in the writing-room and wrote to his Colonel, asking permission to exchange, and requesting leave of absence on urgent private affairs pending the exchange. He had already made up his mind as to the course he should pursue, and having once done so, nothing on earth could induce him to alter his determination. We are prepared for a great deal of adverse criticism on the part of our readers as regards the line of conduct taken up by Cis Poynter in this instance; and we must acknowledge that we are ourselves very angry with him, but we cannot help it; we must chronicle the facts as they occurred. We told you before that his ideas as regards matrimony were very far-fetched. He had a perfect horror of heiress hunting, and yet, just as he had made up his mind to try his luck with the only girl he had ever loved, the cup was dashed from his lips by the news that Edith Hamilton was an heiress.

The next morning he went straight to Tull, the Army agent, to negotiate an exchange. As luck would have it, he had the day before received a letter from a Captain Garrard, who had just got his company in the ——th, then quartered in Montreal, authorising him to arrange an exchange with some regiment that had just begun its term of home service. Cis jumped at the chance. Anything to get away, the further the better. He determined to sell all his horses without reserve, and make a clean sweep of everything. It was no use doing things by halves. Terrible times were these for him, but having put his hand to the plough, he did not for an instant turn back. Of stern material was Cis made, and bitter as were the contents of the cup, he drained them without an instant's hesitation. Not for one second did he temporise. We confess that, much as we admire the tenacity of purpose that can enable a man thus to immolate himself upon the altar of his principles, we have not the strength of mind to undergo such self-inflicted torture, and we can console ourselves with the reflection that we are but in accord with nine-tenths of mankind, who, if embarked under similar circumstances, would be quite content to run before the breeze that Providence sent them. Cis was determined that

Edith and himself must meet no more, and acute as was the suffering that this resolution caused him, he felt that to meet her, now that he had resolved to root her image, if possible, from his heart, would be a severer test than he dared submit himself to. He wrote to Messrs. Tattersall, asking them to sell all his horses absolutely without reserve, and telling them to place the proceeds of the sale to his account at Cox's, and leaving instructions at the club as to the destination of his letters, he betook himself to his own place in Essex.

Very fond of his little place was Cis, and when, six years ago, he had experienced the financial crisis which compelled him to seek fresh fields and pastures new, he had with great difficulty managed to stick to the old place. It happened that it was just now vacant, as his tenant had been compelled to go abroad on account of ill-health, and though it was a nice manageable size, and consequently easily let, he had not yet got a suitable tenant. Thither, then, he repaired, for, wretched as was his state of mind, anything was preferable to running the risk of meeting Edith Hamilton under existing circumstances. He had written to Sir Arthur, telling him that Magnum Bonum was for sale, as he was unavoidably compelled to leave

England at once. And now he felt that he had done all that could be done. It was then that his grief became almost insupportable, and nothing but the *mens conscia recti* within him could have sustained him in this his darkest hour. However. we will draw a veil over the weary monotony of the next ten days.

Chapter XII.

TRANS MARE.

Thanks to the Atlantic cable all was settled as regarded the exchange in an incredibly short time, and the first of July saw him safely landed in Canada. The regiment to which he exchanged had just come to Montreal from Ottawa, and the complete change of scene helped to a certain extent to divert his thoughts from the past, which was fraught with so much that was painful. He could, however, only partially conquer his love, and there were times when his burden seemed almost more than he could carry. He knew that, come what might, the romance of his life had come and gone, leaving behind a wound which time might soften, but which would never quite be healed.

And Edith—what of her? Poor girl! She was as much, if not more, to be pitied than he was. Her grief at his departure was easier to imagine than describe. She had virtually given her heart to this man. She loved him with all her heart and soul, but right bravely did she bear

up, and to one only did she lay bare the secret of her heart—that one was Lady Grenville. *He* had written Lady Grenville a letter full of affection, begging her not to think hardly of him, telling her that no other course was open to him; that he loved Edith, but that there was an insurmountable barrier between them; and asking her to write and cheer him up in his self-imposed exile.

Lady Grenville was simply thunderstruck, and, it must be confessed, bitterly disappointed as well. Women are all matchmakers; it is their favourite game, and she had quite made up her mind that this match between these two was almost *un fait accompli.* His letter mystified her, too. What could be the insurmountable barrier?

Edith could throw no light on the affair. All she could tell Lady Grenville was that they parted the best of friends on Tuesday evening, after having spent half-an-hour at Tattersall's, and that on the Wednesday her father had received a short note from Cis to the effect that he should be unable to go down with them to Westerley, and that he feared it might be long ere they met, as circumstances had arisen which made it imperative that he should go abroad at once.

Our readers will, we hope, forgive us for carting

them backwards and forwards in so casual a manner. We have taken you from Canada to India, and brought you back again *viâ* England; but as we have had the London label on the luggage we do not apologise so humbly as we otherwise should, for no matter whence you come or whither you go, London is right on the road to everywhere. You will doubtless remember that we migrated to India immediately after the finish for the Canadian Grand Military, won by Mark. This race took place some three months after Cis arrived in Canada, and although he had not the energy to go in for racing at present himself, still he could not but take an interest in the race in question. He knew nothing of the form of the competitors on this occasion, but as they cantered down and jumped the hurdle opposite the stand he naturally took stock, and so impressed was he with the style of going and jumping of Garryowen that he took the odds to a hundred pounds, at prices varying from seven to one down to four to one. Nothing went better for two-and-a-half miles of the journey; in fact he had mentally decided that there were, even at this comparatively early stage of the race, but two really in it, bar accidents, and these were Mark, the subsequent winner, and Garryowen.

A ripping, tearing, star-gazing brute, rejoicing in the appropriate name of Skyscraper, was leading a couple of lengths, but he was chancing his fences in a most ghastly manner, and tiring fast into the bargain. At the very next fence he swerved, landed bang in front of Garryowen, and fell; result, Garryowen landed right atop of him and rolled over; fortunately Skyscraper was too blown to move, or his jockey would probably have ridden his last ride, as he was under his horse, with his head unpleasantly near his hind legs. Garryowen's rider hung on to his horse's head, but unfortunately the buckle pulled through, and the horse got away. Meanwhile Mark had nothing to do but sail along with a forty lengths lead of the rest and win hands down. Latitude, "half fit," was second, and Rosebud, a nice short-legged mare, that could stay for a month at her own pace, was third. Curiously enough the three placed horses of last year were the only three backed for any weight of money on this occasion by the general public. Latitude had the credit of possessing a lot of pace, and his admirers maintained that if he had not been seriously interfered with early in the race, and had only been fit, he would have brought Mark along a good deal faster the last mile; however, the public, like ourselves, do not

believe in excuses for beaten horses, and though in this instance the backers of Latitude really had good grounds for their fondness, the fact remained that Mark was very well, and that the connections of the stable feared nothing.

As the all eventful day drew near, Mark became a red-hot favourite, and it was difficult to procure more than two to one against him. Latitude came next at four to one, and as the course, which had hitherto been very hard, had been not only softened, but rendered decidedly holding by the forty-eight hours' incessant rain, the backers of Rosebud made a strong move in favour of their mare, and landed her at five to one taken freely. Thus stood matters as regards the three favourites on the eve of the race.

We must now, however, enlighten our readers as to the reasons which induced Cis Poynter to make so bold a move in favour of the despised outsider Garryowen. The horse in question was the property of a Mr. Bawtry, who lived at Lachine, some ten miles up the St. Lawrence. Lachine, as all soldiers who have ever been quartered in Montreal know, is a charming village on the banks of the river, and is famous for its rapids. A real good genial fellow was Mr. Bawtry. He was a prime favourite with the garrison, and to spend

three days' leave with Bawtry, his charming daughter, and equally charming niece, was the height of bliss to those quartered at Montreal all through the hot summer months, for charming as is Montreal as a quarter, it shines to least advantage in the eyes of the garrison when the thermometer is at 85° in the shade, and when owing to two or three companies of each regiment being away at Chamblis for the annual course of musketry, extra duties and guards are consequently entailed on those left behind. As surely as Saturday arrived so surely did some member or members of the garrison avail himself of Mr. Bawtry's proffered hospitality, and as attendance at church parade always has been more honoured in the breach than in the observance, there was nearly always a houseful from Saturday till Monday morning.

Chapter XIII.

AN UNFORTUNATE FAMILY.

Some four months before our story opens, Cis Poynter, while spending his Sunday on this wise, strolled out with his host to look at two or three young ones in a field close to the house. This field lay low and near the river, and as it never became hard in the dryest summer, was invaluable for bad-legged ones.

After having duly inspected the young stock, Cis Poynter drew his host's attention to a big, plain horse standing in a swampy hollow, lazily flicking the flies off with his tail, and apparently viewing with supreme contempt the gambols of his younger equine brethren.

"That," said Mr. Bawtry, "that is old Garryowen, who ran last year in the Grand Military. I believe he is a real good horse, if he would only stand training, but that I fear he will never do; he has been a most unfortunate horse all his life."

"Let us have his history," said Cis.

"With pleasure, but it is a long story, and I fear you will be heartily sick of the name of Garryowen by the time I get to the finish."

"I will chance that," said Cis, filling his pipe, and proceeding to settle himself on a rail.

"Well, here goes then," said Bawtry, "stop me when you are tired."

"All right, go ahead."

"Well, I bought him from Owen the dealer; you know the old chap, he doesn't do much now-a-days, but he hangs out at that pretty little crib just across the 'Champ de Mars' from your Mess-house."

"I know," said Cis, "I saw him riding a roughish young 'un some months ago, and was struck by his patience, and thought what a fine horseman he was."

"That's the man, he is a fine horseman. He has a history too, and though he rarely talks of the past, it is easy to see that he has known better days; he is undoubtedly a gentleman."

"However, to return to the old horse; Owen said when he sold him to me, 'Look here, Mr. Bawtry, he is the last colt from the good old mare. She has bred me five colts and three fillies, and I don't think that there was a bad one amongst the lot.'"

"Any of them won anything?" queried Cis.

"No, not one of them. Her first colt got drowned at the time of the big flood. Her second ran away when being broken, and ran into a cart coming round a corner, the shaft went in at his chest and came out at his ribs, killing him on the spot. One broke down in training, for though Owen said he had the best looking forelegs he ever saw, his owner galloped him clean off them. Two of the fillies were bought by a man from Troy, to break to harness as a pair, and Owen never heard of them again."

"Well, perhaps they may have had better luck," said Cis.

"They may have for all I know, but a relentless fate seems to pursue the whole lot of them. Well, there are still three more to deal with. He gave one to Captain Moore of the Hussars after he had won the Grand Military on a horse that he sold him, and over which he won a big stake for him. He got burnt when their stables were burnt down, though all the other horses were rescued. One died as a foal, while he was away from home, (neglect of course,) and here is the last of them."

"Well! Well!" said Cis Poynter, "it does really seem as if fate was dead against the whole lot. There is a lot of good, though, about this

horse, and he might, even yet, make amends for all the disappointments."

"He has had every chance given him," said Mr. Bawtry; "I was going on to tell you his various misadventures. The ill-luck that has attended all the others is a fitting prelude to his career."

"Let's have it," said Cis, "I am getting deeply interested in the family."

"Here goes then. Garryowen here is the last of the lot; 'he is as like his mother as two peas,' Owen says, 'both in temper and looks'; when I bought him he said, 'if he is half as good as the old mare he can sweep the board; I have never asked him to go, but I let him stride round Longueil racecourse the other day, and he is one of the very finest movers I ever rode; he doesn't pull a bit more than I like, but just goes nicely into his bridle.'

"The more I looked at the horse the better I liked him; he grew upon me, and ultimately I said, 'look here, Owen, we are old friends, I will give you £60 for the horse, and if he ever wins me a race you shall have half the stake.' 'The horse is yours, Mr. Bawtry,' said he, and I brought him home.

"I had a nephew staying with me a short time

after, a reckless dare-devil sailor-boy, and one day I caught the young rascal sailing along over all these fences. Stiff post and rails, as you see, and none of them less than four feet high."

"That they are not," said Cis, who by this time was deeply interested in the account of the career of Garryowen.

"I measured one," continued Bawtry, "he had taken off out of holding plough, up to the knees and hocks, it was a hog-backed rail, four foot three-and-a-half high. I did not say much, as the youngster had to join his ship at Quebec the next day, and I didn't want to spoil his fun."

"I suppose you made up your mind to have a shy at a race with him, didn't you?" said Cis.

"Indeed I did; I felt sure that I had got a good one, and determined to give him fair play; he was evidently a natural jumper, as my nephew, though as hard as nails, was no horseman, and had no pretensions whatever to make a young one. I noticed, however, that he let his head alone, and did not hang on to the bridle."

"Ah!" said Cis, "there was the secret." And so say we.

Our readers will agree with us that here was the key, the golden key. Half the horses that fall are pulled into their fences by the mutton fists of their

riders. How often have we seen horses performing faultlessly when being lounged over their fences, measuring their distance to a nicety, landing in good form with their hind legs tucked well under them, hardly dwelling for a fraction of a second, and yet, when asked to jump the same fences with a man on their backs, how different the picture; head in the air, either racing madly at their fences, galloping into them, taking off too soon, or stopping dead short, and then bucking over them and landing all abroad; and why?

The question is answered in one word, "Hands." Or rather, in this instance, their absence. Hands are a gift, a priceless gift, to a horseman; they are as difficult to define as the two other indefinables, namely, "woman and scent." The longer we live, the more we study them, the less we known about them.

Mais revenons. "I went to see Owen," continued Bawtry, "and told him how well the horse shaped; he was delighted. 'I knew he was a good one,' said he; 'I will send you a man to school him, and we will run him in the Maiden Hurdle race at Longueil; we have eleven weeks in which to get him ready. I can borrow a good horse to try him with, a fortnight before the race, and if he ain't good enough there's not much harm done.'

"By jove, why it's luncheon time," said Bawtry, 'I had no idea that it was so late."

"Nor I," said Cis, "but do finish your story before we go in."

"All right," said Bawtry, "it is a cold luncheon, and will not hurt by keeping.

"To make a long story short, we got the horse pretty fit, tried him, and he won his trial handsomely. Owen was in ecstacies. 'But,' said he, 'whatever he may do in this race, four miles over a country is his forte, he jumps too big at present for hurdle racing, but he can lick all this lot and give them a hurdle start.'

"The day came, we backed him for a tidy lot, though it got about, as all good things do, and he started a red-hot favourite. We had to put up a professional, and the beggar sold us; at least, I am sure of it as I possibly can be. He ran round a post half-a-mile from home when the race was completely at his mercy; his excuse was that Jack Roper ran him off, and I have not the slightest doubt he did, but I am equally sure that our jockey was a consenting party to the game."

"What real hard lines," said Cis, "I suppose anybody who could sit still could have won easily?"

"Certainly they could, he is a delightful horse to ride. Honest as the day."

"What did you do next?" said Cis.

"We were awfully disgusted, of course, but Owen said, 'Cheer up, we will run him in the big race,' this was in about two months' time. He went on well till a week before the race, and then he sprung a banging great curb, on which he was very lame. We chucked him up, and put the irons on both hocks. Owen fired him himself; he is worth all the vets in the dominion."

"What next?" said Cis. "He seems to be keeping up the family reputation for unluckiness."

"We rested him till the spring, and then I made a dog-cart horse of him, and a clinker he is at that game I can tell you, just about the best I ever drove. He was so sound that Owen begged me to give him another innings at the Autumn meeting. A short time before the races he played us the old game, put up an enormous splint on the off fore, which so interfered with the ligament that we had to stop him again. I was heartily sick of the whole business by this time, but Owen fired him on that leg, and would have fired him on both, but I wouldn't let him."

"A pity you didn't," said Cis Poynter; "it doesn't hurt them any more to fire two legs than one, and when once you have got them cast, and plenty of hot irons, it doesn't take much longer.

Besides, one fired fore-leg is just as great a blemish as two; and if you only fire one leg, the good one gets such a lot of work while they are resting the fired one that it often goes, too."

"Quite true," said Mr. Bawtry, "and that was exactly what Owen said. You should cultivate him; you two would get on admirably."

"I mean to," said Cis. "Well, get forrard!"

"The beggar came up sound the next spring, and I drove him again. Owen wanted me to run him once more, but I was heartily sick of the whole business and positively refused to. The old man was off his head about the horse, and finally asked me if I would sell him? 'Certainly,' said I, 'if you can find anybody fool enough to buy him.' 'Well,' said he, 'they say there is no fool like an old fool, and I want him for myself.' I let him have the horse for a pony, and a fortnight before the Grand Military he sold him for £100 and contingencies to Berry, of the Gunners. The horse had done wonderfully well meanwhile. He came fit to the post for the Grand Military, and ran a good horse for two miles, fencing better than anything else, when a brute fell in front of him, brought him down, and he took no further part in the race."

"H'm! and that is the finale, I suppose?" said Cis.

"No, it isn't quite. He put up another big splint directly after the race, and Owen bought him back for £20 and fired him on his near fore. I gave him a run here, and he has not had a saddle on his back since last Grand Military, that is nearly eight months ago. Now you know all about him."

"Thanks very much," said Cis. "I think the ill luck of the family has culminated in this horse."

Now Garryowen had, during the course of the narration, come up to within five yards of the rails on which Mr. Bawtry and Cis were seated, and had given the latter every opportunity of seeing the state of his understandings. He had, in fact, been enabled to "vet" the horse fairly satisfactorily as far as was possible without actually handling his legs. His curb was plainly to be seen, but as he was an aged horse there was no fear to be entertained on that score, as Cis knew well that it was not once in a blue moon that curbs trouble an aged horse. His fore legs, too, though decidedly lumpy and round, looked practically sound.

"Thanks again," said Cis, "for a very interest-

ing account of the adventures of a real unlucky one," as he descended from his perch on the rail and strolled homewards with his host. "I do admire Mr. Owen's pluck and perseverance though. I should like to make the old man's acquaintance."

"Nothing easier," said Mr. Bawtry. "I will introduce you to him to-morrow, if you like."

"Right you are," said Cis. "You shall lunch with me, and we will take him on our way to the Allens' and one or two people on whom I want to call, then back to dinner, and you shall have your revenge at billiards."

"Agreed," said Bawtry, and with that the subject dropped.

On arrival at the house they were greeted with much chaff by the ladies of the household, consisting of Miss Bawtry and her cousin, the sister of the sailor boy who had given Garryowen his first lessons as a fencer.

"Well, daddy," said his daughter, "we began to think that you and Captain Poynter would take root. What on earth have you been doing with old Garryowen? Sybil said she thought you were trying to mesmerise him, and had succeeded too."

"I have merely been listening to the cares,

woes, and disasters that have befallen the whole family of Garryowens, or whatever the family name is," said Cis, laughing; "and it is really neither more nor less than a tragedy in high equine life."

"Well, I began to think that the poor old horse had developed some new beauty, though I confess that I have as yet never been able to discover any. However, I will say this for him, that I never rode his equal."

"And handsome is as handsome does, you know, Miss Bawtry," said Cis, as he put down an empty glass which two seconds before had been filled with claret-cup. "I fear, however, that he has not brought much grist to Mr. Bawtry's mill as yet."

"But Frank says that he never rode such a horse in his life," broke in Sybil Manley. "And when I wrote and told him of all the poor horse's misfortunes, he said that if uncle had only let him have had the management of the horse, he would have won all his races."

"H'm," said Mr. Bawtry, "Frank has had such a lot of experience, hasn't he? And I wonder where he would have kept him? I can quite imagine the Admiral allowing him to fit up a loose box on the quarter-deck of the flagship."

And, chuckling at his own joke, he toddled off to his room to read the last "*Field*," as *he* called it; but, as the other inmates of the house knew full well, from auricular demonstration, to indulge in the recognized number of winks.

Chapter XIV.

TRANSATLANTIC BEAUTIES.

We will now give our readers a description of the two cousins. Helen Bawtry had lost her mother when quite a baby, and on her had centred ever since all her father's affection. Mr. Bawtry's sister had married a hussar, and had followed the fortunes of the regiment to India, where her husband (a great Shekharry) was killed by a tiger. His poor widow survived the shock of her husband's death but a few months, and Mr. Bawtry at once sent for her only daughter, a child just one year younger than Helen. The boy was then at Eton, but his mother's people got him into the Navy, and, as we have seen, he was now a midshipman on board the "Empress," then lying at Quebec.

The two cousins grew up together, and in pleasant places indeed were cast the lines of the little orphan. In looks they differed as widely as night and morning. Helen was tall and fair, with a lovely complexion, and masses of hair which you might see twenty times in as many different

lights, and then be puzzled to say exactly its colour. It is needless to say that her admirers called it golden, while the jealous ones of her own sex pronounced it reddest of the red. Big, truthful, grey eyes, as honest as the day, a mouth which again her detractors pronounced too big, but with the best of teeth. Such is a rough sketch of Helen Bawtry.

Sybil was *petite*, a brunette, with blue-black hair, eyelashes that swept her cheek, but which, when lifted, revealed a pair of eyes which slew you with one glance, the dearest little mouth, and a complexion of cream; she was a most perfect foil for her cousin. Respectively twenty-one and twenty, they had gone unscathed through two seasons of Montreal gaieties, and although laid siege to by suitors innumerable, they had neither of them ever exhibited the very smallest preference for any one in particular.

"I can't make those two cousins out at all," said Ronald, of the Highlanders. "I never met anybody like them. They are all right as long as you talk to them on ordinary topics, but the instant that you try the sentimental tack, Miss Bawtry seems to be a hundred miles away, and begs your pardon as if she had not heard a word you said, and the other girl always bursts out

laughing, and either asks if you are rehearsing a part in a play, or tells you what a funny man you are. I'll defy anybody to make any sort of running when they laugh at him."

Now Ronald was the acknowledged lady-killer of his regiment—and, indeed, of almost any garrison-town where he had been quartered during the last six years—and a really good-looking fellow he was, too. He loved to be petted and made much of by the ladies, and, to give him his due, he got a good deal more than his share of it. The two cousins, however, did not the least fall victims to his charms. They saw that he had been a bit spoilt, and tacitly resolved to treat him the least bit cavalierly, if it be possible to apply the word cavalierly to the sex in that sense. The result may be imagined. Easy conquests, as we all know, are but lightly esteemed. Ronald grew more and more determined to ingratiate himself with the cousins. He was, however, most attracted by Sibyl Manley. His pride was wounded—or shall we dignify it by the name of pride? At all events, call it what we may, Ronald became most desperately in earnest. It was the old story. Everything in this life is valued exactly in proportion as it is easily or hardly won.

Here, for the present, we propose to leave

Ronald. We wish him luck, but we must confess that at present it looks long odds against his winning the prize on which he has set his heart.

Chapter XV.

FAIRLY HAUNTED!

Cis Poynter, having stayed to dinner, drove back to Montreal in the cool of the beautiful June evening. As had been the case whenever he was alone, ever since he had torn himself from Edith Hamilton, his thoughts for some miles of the drive were of her, and her alone. After a time, however, Garryowen got into his head.

"Let me see," soliloquized he, "this is the third of June; the Grand Military is run on the second of October. I should have four months to get him fit in. He is eight-year-old, and won't take so long to get into condition as a young horse; besides, he has had a bit of corn every day ever since he was turned out. I must have a chat to this Mr. Owen on the quiet, and ask him if he will sell. No doubt about that, I should think, if by so doing he is enabled to see the horse run again. It will be something to interest me and distract my thoughts, for I sometimes feel as if I should go mad."

Poor Cis! He was as just as madly in love

with Edith Hamilton as ever he had been, and just lately he had begun to wonder whether, if, as he gathered from Lady Grenville's letters, Edith was suffering too, it was not a cowardly thing to bolt away without word or line, as he had done? Meanwhile his thoughts travelled back to Garryowen, and by the time that his dog-cart was rattling over the Nôtre Dame Street pavement, he had bought, trained, run, and won, with the horse. The rattle of the stones, however, dispelled his dreams, and with a shrug of the shoulders, as he chucked the reins to his groom, he came back to the realities of everyday life.

Ah, delightful faculty of castle-building, equally within the reach of rich and poor! No matter though they do come tumbling down about our ears, the more imaginative of us never weary of laying fresh foundation stones.

The author never bought a young one yet, but he thought he had either one good enough to win a steeplechase, or, at all events, imagined himself getting well away from the Birchwood at Radbourne, and having just about the best of it until the fox was run into handsomely within a field of Sapperton. Those who know the line will agree hat it does take a bit of doing, especially when the country rides deep and the Meynell ladies

get away on good terms on a good scenting morning.

The foregoing may sound egotistical, but it is not. I am only putting on paper the thoughts and aspirations of ninety-nine out of every hundred men who go out hunting. I allude, of course, to the hard riding division. Let us be honest. We do, in our heart of hearts, love to have the best of it in everything; not only when hounds run, but between the flags. What more delightful than to see your adversaries a field from home niggling at their horses, while you know that once over the last fence you have nothing to do but shake him up and let him stride home a comfortable winner with a good few pounds up your sleeve? Aye, and on moor and stubble, too, we all like to hold it as straight as our neighbours, and just a little bit straighter. It does not follow that one need be jealous beyond proper bounds. We don't want men to say, "Thank God he's down," as we have known good men say in the heat of the chase when some rival, who has had a little bit the best of it, comes to grief. But rivalry, friendly rivalry, should exist; without it, men would not attain to the wonderfully high standard that they do. Thank goodness we can honestly say that for excellence

at sport, all round, Englishmen are literally *facile principes*. Long may they remain so.

Punctually to time on Monday, Mr. Bawtry's jolly red face shone in upon the occupants of the ante-room, where Cis and one or two others were lounging over the papers. After luncheon, though he begged hard for one game of fifty up, the poor old fellow was borne off by his host to call on Mr. Owen, whose acquaintance Cis Poynter was so anxious to make.

Garryowen had fairly haunted him all night. He dreamt of him, and when at last (his dream having turned to India) he found himself riding in a pony race, which he was apparently winning anyhow, Garryowen suddenly dropped, as it were, from the skies and beat him a length, he jumped up and lit a pipe, determining, if possible, to exorcise the demon of nightmare. He woke, however, next morning with the horse's name on his lips.

"Fairly haunted, by Jove," said he. "Been racing ten years, had scores of good ones through my hands, and can't get an old crock like this out of my head. Hang the horse! I'll buy him at once, and have done with it; he is bound to do for the cart, at all events."

On arrival at Mr. Owen's little crib, they for-

tunately found him at home, and after a few introductory remarks, Cis Poynter broached the subject that was nearest to his heart.

"Mr. Bawtry told me the history of your old horse, yesterday, Mr. Owen. I was very much interested in the account of his misfortunes, and if you will allow me to say so, I cannot but heartily admire your pluck and perseverance in sticking to him as you have."

"Well, Captain Poynter," responded his host, "I did think a lot of the old horse, and I really don't see why there should not even yet be a race in him. Just think what a pull he would have in the weights for the next Grand Military. He is an aged horse that has never won a race of any description, and is consequently entitled to an allowance of fourteen pounds; his weight for age would be twelve stone three, so, with his allowance, he would carry eleven stone three, and Mark, last year's winner, with his ten pound penalty, would have twelve stone thirteen on his back—twenty-four pounds in Garryowen's favour."

"It is a lot of weight to give away, certainly," said Cis, "but there would be none too much time to get your horse ready, would there?"

"None too much, Captain Poynter; but he comes to hand quick. If his old legs would only

stand, there is not a horse foaled in the Dominion, or the States, either, that could beat him at those weights. Ah! you may laugh, Mr. Bawtry, but it is true."

"I'll buy the horse, Mr. Owen, if you will sell him," said Cis; "I will give you thirty pounds for him, and chance it. If he wins the Grand Military I will give you half the stake. How will that suit you?"

"It suits me admirably, Captain Poynter. I like a straight-forward man who goes straight to the point instead of beating about the bush, as so many do. The horse is yours."

"All right," said Cis, "I mean to have a good try to win the Grand Military with him."

"How much pleasanter dealing would be if it was always conducted in this sort of way," said Mr. Owen. "I am, or at all events, have been, ever since I came to Canada, a horse-dealer. Horse-dealer and rogue are synonymous terms in the estimation of a very large percentage of people, and many is the laugh I have had to myself over the extraordinarily suspicious way in which people have approached me."

"Come, come," said Cis, "I don't think you give your business fair play. I know many most excellent men in the dealing line, whose word I

would as soon take as anybody else's, aye, and much more readily, too, than that of most people. A dealer's position in the eyes of the world is altered marvellously now-a-days."

"I am glad to hear you say so, Captain Poynter; however, I will, if you have five minutes to spare, tell you how one young—officer—I was almost calling him gentleman—treated me. It was at the time that I had Sherbroke (the horse on which Captain Moore won the Grand Military) in the stable. Well, a purse-proud cub, whose father had made his money in trade, and who fancied that his wealth, and the fact of his being a cornet in a hussar regiment, permitted him to take liberties with a horse-dealer, came here one day, and said that he wanted to look at some horses. Captain Moore had been talking of Sherbroke at mess the night before, and saying that if he could afford it he would buy him. This youngster, who had only just come out, and of course wanted to win the Grand Military, posted off here after parade next morning, and after seeing them all out, and having ridden one or two, if you can call it riding to hang on to the cantle of the saddle with one hand 'over a hurdle' and have the other hand in your mouth, he crabbed Sherbroke so much that I felt sure he wanted him."

"What a fool," broke in Cis. "If I were a dealer I should cock it on like a shot to people of that sort."

"And so they do," said Owen, "I expect. Well, when he asked his price I told him £100, and the contingency if he won a race. 'Oh,' said he, 'I wanted him as a second-charger.' Now, £100 was nothing to him, but he evidently had an idea that dealers always asked about double what they meant to take, so he promptly offered me £50, if a brother officer approved of him, and if he would pass the vet, and if the colonel would pass him as a charger. This last *proviso*, I suppose, he thought clever. I could imagine him saying, after he had won a race, 'Ah yes! I bought him from Owen, the dealer, gammoned the old fool that I wanted him for a charger,' for which piece of brilliant generalship he would probably receive the plaudits of some two or three youngsters as green as himself."

"Well, what did you do?" said Cis. "Show him the way out?"

"Oh no! 'You can have the horse examined by any vet you like,' said I. 'Hill is the only one of whom I have any opinion, Turner and Holmes are, however, both M.R.C.V.S. men; but remember, please, Mr. Hodgkins, that £100 is my price.'"

"I suppose he gave you your £100 after that?" said Cis.

"No, indeed, he didn't; he offered me £75. I was boiling inwardly, but kept my temper. He went away, and sent Holmes to examine him. Holmes passed him; he could not do otherwise, for he was one of the very soundest horses I ever owned. Then came an officer of the regiment with a note, requesting that I would allow the bearer to ride the horse up to the barracks for the colonel's approval. The horse came back, led by a soldier-servant, but neither note or message. I heard nothing for two days, when I received a letter enclosing a cheque for £90, and requesting me to send the horse by the bearer."

"By jove," said Cis, "that fellow wanted kicking."

"So I thought," said Owen. "But we get wonderful control over ourselves when we reach the sixties."

"What did you do?" said Cis.

"I put the cheque in an envelope and returned it with my compliments, in addition to which I begged to inform Mr. Hodgkins that I had made other arrangements, and that the horse was not for sale just then."

"Capital! Capital!" said Cis and Bawtry, almost in a breath.

"That was not all though. Back came the messenger with another cheque for £100. This I also returned. In less than half-an-hour came an officer of the regiment, saying that Mr. Hodgkins had deputed him to buy the horse for him, and asking me to name a price. I declined to put the horse on price, and when I had told his brother officer how I had been treated, he ceased to attempt to deal for his friend. He was evidently thoroughly disgusted, and at once washed his hands of the whole concern."

"I should rather think so," said Cis.

"Two days after I met Captain Moore," continued Owen. "He was in great distress. 'Oh, Mr. Owen,' said he, 'I am awfully down on my luck. Poor old Sabretasche has cracked; he did a rousing gallop this morning, and pulled up apparently sound, but he was dead lame five minutes afterwards. It's all up with him. He never *was* so well in his life. I really thought I couldn't lose the Grand Military, and made certain of the Regimental Cup.' 'I am sorry,' said I. 'Will you buy a five-year-old, of which I have a great opinion, and which can certainly win the Cup for you, if not the big race? The horse I mean is

Sherbrooke.' 'I hardly like to buy him after young Hodgkins has been fiddling after him,' said he; 'he might think it a bit sharp.' 'My dear Captain Moore,' said I, 'Mr. Hodgkins has not enough money to buy any horse of mine. He treated me disgracefully, and I cannot forget it.' 'I am really very sorry indeed,' said Captain Moore; 'you must put it down to gross ignorance.' 'I fear that there was more low cunning about it than anything else,' said I, 'but let us drop the subject.' 'With all my heart,' said he. 'May I have a ride?' 'Certainly,' said I, 'and if you like the horse, he is yours at £80, and anothe £50 if he wins the Grand Military, or £20 if he lands the Regimental Cup.' We went up to the farm, where I had just put up a big bank the *facsimile* of the one on the steeplechase course, the ditch on the take-off side being a bit bigger. Captain Moore rode the horse over all the fences, and though he nearly fell at the bank the first time, he jumped it well twice afterwards. He bought him, and won both races with him."

"You backed him pretty well, too, didn't you, Mr. Owen?" said Cis.

"Indeed we did; and Mr. Hodgkins had considerable cause to regret his behaviour to me, as out of pique he peppered the horse so heavily

that he lost £800 over the race. Captain Moore and I backed him to win us £2,000, and £500 of it was laid in one bet by this young gentleman; ten fifties he laid Captain Moore."

"Dear me, how time flies," said Bawtry. "Can it be four o'clock?"

"It is though," said Cis. "It doesn't seem ten minutes since we got here."

"Thank you both for the compliment, gentlemen," said Mr. Owen. "Will you have just one glass of dry sherry before you go, to wet the deal, as they say at home?"

"With pleasure," said Cis. "Now look here, Mr. Owen, I am going to ask you not to mention the fact of my having bought the old horse from you. If he is any good, I may as well win a good stake over him. I may tell you that I am no novice at the game, as I raced with fair success for five years in India. If I think the horse has a chance, I will tell you, and you shall have any reasonable amount of my book that you care to have, at the average odds."

"Thank you very much, Captain Poynter. I am delighted that you have got the horse; in fact, I would really have rather given him to you, than not seen him have one more try to break the spell of ill luck that seems to have dogged his

whole career. It is most gratifying, too, to find that there is one man who thinks as I do about the horse; though, as you have only seen him in the rough at grass, you cannot know much about him."

"Ah, but I backed him last year," said Cis. "I had just joined, and knew nothing of the 'form' out here, but I saw him canter down and jump his preliminary hurdle; and, what's more, I lost £100 over him."

"Did you?" said Owen. "What did you think of his chance, till he fell?"

"Well," said Cis, "if you want to know exactly what I thought, I will tell you. I considered that he had only to stand up to win."

"Let me shake you by the hand, Captain Poynter," said Owen, jumping up from his seat. "By gad! we will win the Grand Military yet. I handled his legs last week, and they are hard and callous; wonderfully improved. In fact, I have no doubt, in my own mind, as to his ability to stand a preparation."

Our two friends having bid Owen good-bye, continued their drive, dropped a card or two, drove round the mountain, and got back just in time to dress for dinner.

Chapter XVI.

THE RIGHT WOMAN IN THE RIGHT PLACE.

Cis decided to go out to Lachine directly after parade next day, have Garryowen's shoes on, and see if he really was sound. This he did, personally superintending the shoeing; he found that the horse had capital feet, and though both forelegs were decidedly rotund, still they were perfectly cool and callous, and handled well. As to his curb he had no fears whatever on that score, in fact, Owen had told him that it had absorbed considerably during the last year, as curbs frequently do.

Cis had taken the precaution to put the saddle on before he led the horse down to the smithy, gradually tightening the girths, and when the blacksmith had turned him out with a neat set of light shoes, Cis led him to a bit of grass across the road, and jumped up. The old horse walked away as quietly as if he were in regular work.

"He is a nice horse to sit on, at all events," soliloquised his rider. "What beautiful shoulders they are when you are atop of them! Even

better than I thought. What a lot there is in front of one! Come old man, we'll see how you move," and so saying, Cis opened a gate leading into a long grass field with a haystack about half-way up it. The old horse gave a hoist and a squeal as Cis touched him with his heels, and then settled into a long, swinging canter, carrying his head low, in fact, almost between his knees, and yet hardly pulling an ounce. It was his style of going, and Cis knew from experience that many good stayers carry their heads in the same place. "What a stride the beggar has," was his comment, as on arriving at the top of the field he turned him round, and walked quietly down again. As he passed the haystack he noticed that it was fenced in by posts and rails about three-foot-nine high, and he also saw that between the stack and the hedge there was just room enough to pop in and out over the two flights of rails; he could not resist the temptation to have a cut at it, so walking Garryowen quietly up to the first post and rails to let him look at it, he turned him round, took him back about thirty yards, and then set him at it. No doubt about the horse's intentions. He cocked his ears, caught hold of his bridle, measured his distance to a nicety, and popped in and out, as clever as a cat. "Good old man,"

said Cis, patting his neck, "if your old legs will only stand, there is no reason why you shouldn't win more than one race; I expect you are really better than ever you were in your life. By the way, how goes the enemy? feeding-time, by jingo," and trotting back to the Hermitage, he found Bawtry and the two girls awaiting him on the verandah.

"Why I declare if it isn't dear old Garry," said Helen.

"Yes, Miss Bawtry, it is, and a delightful horse to ride he is too, you did not exaggerate his capabilities on Sunday the least bit."

"How quiet he is," said Sybil, "considering he has not had a saddle on his back since last year's Grand Military. You naughty old thing," continued she, kissing his nose. "I lost a fortune in gloves over you then, and as I am a glorious exception to the rule, and always pay my bets, my finances have been in quite a crippled state ever since."

"We must try to win the fortune back with interest," said Cis.

"No, thank you, Captain Poynter; once bit, twice shy, besides uncle has no interest in the horse now, and if he had, nothing would tempt him to run him again."

Cis vouchsafed no answer, except to slightly raise his hat and trot round to the stables, where he resigned him to the groom, with instructions to tie him up in a stall till after luncheon. "I will have what the dealers call 'a cold show,' in an hour's time," said he.

"Uncle," said Sybil Manley, as Garryowen's tail disappeared round the corner of the house, "what on earth did Captain Poynter mean by saying that I should win my fortune back again? Has he got any good horses?"

"I don't think he has raced at all since he came out," said Mr. Bawtry.

"Well, there is something on the tapis, I am quite sure," said Helen. "Look at him, Sybil, whenever he tries to look particularly innocent like that, there is always something in the wind. It is no use your trying to deceive us, daddy dear. Is Garryowen going to run again?"

"Here, Poynter, perhaps you can satisfy the curiosity of these girls," said Mr. Bawtry, as Cis sauntered leisurely on to the verandah.

"What is it, ladies?" said he.

"Well, we want to know what Garryowen has got a new set of shoes for, and why you have been riding him, and what you meant just now, when

you said that Sybil must win her fortune back," said Helen.

"Oh, curiosity, thy name is woman," said Mr. Bawtry in a stage whisper. "My life won't be worth living if you don't tell them, Poynter; it is no use telling them anything but the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth; you may trust them, they won't blab."

"I had pretty well made up my mind to do that already," said Cis, "*On dit* that a woman cannot keep a secret, but I know the contrary, from past experience, and therefore I now beg to inform you two ladies that I am the proprietor of Garryowen."

"Poor old Garry. I can't bear to think that the old horse is going to leave us," said Helen, "I shall miss him awfully."

"Well, I don't think he will go far away," said Mr. Bawtry, "that is, if Captain Poynter will allow me to have a voice in the matter. Now listen to me, Poynter! I have as good boxes here as a man can possibly want. My man Michael is very fond of the old horse and will act according to instructions; he will feed him to the minute; in fact, he would much rather miss his own meals than neglect the horse. You are most welcome to both box and man. If two good judges like yourself and Owen have such good

faith in the horse, who knows but that he may make amends for all his previous mishaps, and win a Grand Military after all?"

"You are too kind, Mr. Bawtry," said Cis, "and I really do not like to trespass so much on your good nature. The only difficulty that I see in the way of this arrangement is, who is to ride the old horse? He wants a lot of long, slow work for the next two months, either alongside another horse, or with a light boy on his back." At this juncture Sybil crossed to Helen, and whispered something in her ear.

"Nonsense!" said Helen; "what an idea!"

"What is it?" said Mr. Bawtry.

"Oh, only some of Sybil's nonsense," answered Helen.

"It isn't nonsense at all, uncle dear," said Sybil. "I only told Helen that she could ride the horse as well as any light boy, and better too; she rides beautifully, Captain Poynter."

"Well done, Sybil," said Mr. Bawtry, "you have hit the right nail on the head this time." "Look here, Poynter, my girl rides really well."

"I know that," said Cis; "but I couldn't dream of imposing such a task on Miss Bawtry; otherwise I should be quite unable to find anybody better qualified."

"If that is your only objection," said Helen, "I can assure you that I shall be delighted to ride Garryowen for you. I shall be so glad to have something definite to do, and if he were by any chance to win the race, I should be the proudest girl in Canada."

"Very well then," said Cis; "I cannot thank you all sufficiently; you, Bawtry, for placing groom and box at my disposal; you, Miss Bawtry, for kindly consenting to give him his work; and last, but not least, you, Miss Sybil, for suggesting that Miss Bawtry should do so."

"That is settled then," said Bawtry, "you will not regret the choice of Helen, she is a beautiful weight, has first-rate hands, and the horse knows her and is very fond of her."

"*Cela va sans dire,*" said Cis.

"Why, Captain Poynter, I have hopes of you yet," said Helen; "at last I have heard you pay a compliment, and a very neat one too."

"Well, I confess that compliments are not in my line much, but you see, in this instance, I may have a motive. It is most important that I should keep on good terms with you, or I may have you sending in your jacket, as it is termed in racing parlance."

"You must take old Michael into your con-

fidence," said Sybil, "he thinks there is no horse like Garry, and he has always had an excuse for him on all occasions."

"I will do that," answered Cis, as they entered the dining-room.

After luncheon, Cis proposed that they should all adjourn to the stables and inspect the horse, a proposal that was promptly acceded to on all sides. Garryowen whinnied as soon as he heard the girl's steps.

"Cupboard love, I fear," said Cis, as the bread disappeared in less than no time.

"Yes," said Helen, "there is one road to the hearts of both horses and men—feed them."

"Had you there, my lad," said Bawtry, chuckling with delight. "It does one good to hear somebody else catch it."

"Now, Miss Bawtry," said Cis, "if you have got all the way to his heart, we will get Michael to run him in hand up the drive; I want to see if he is sound after his canter this morning. Walk him away for fifty yards and then trot him very slowly back, please, Michael; let his head be perfectly loose. Sound, thank goodness," said Cis, as the horse trotted past him. Following him into the stable he said, "Now, Michael, I have bought this horse. Mr. Bawtry is kind

enough to place a loose-box at my disposal. I mean to train him for the Grand Military. Miss Bawtry is so good as to say that she will ride him for me in his work at present, and, if you can find time to look after him I shall be very much obliged to you."

"Very well, sir," said Michael; "if the old 'orse don't do any good it won't be no fault of mine; I like that old 'orse, I allus did, though 'e's 'ad a power o' bad luck. Thank you kindly, sir," added he, as Cis slipped a couple of five-dollar notes into his hand.

"I will send you out some real good oats at once. Can you cut him some vetches for a bit, it won't do to put him on to hard food all at once?"

"Plenty of vetches, sir," said Michael.

"All right then, we will mix some with his hay, make bread and cheese of it in fact, and reduce the vetches by degrees. He is a bit gross, so we will physic him at once."

Cis stayed to dinner, and as he rode home began to cast about for a good horseman to ride.

"It isn't good enough to get down to the weight myself," said he. "I walk twelve six now, and it means getting off about a stone and a half, for I hate riding over a country in a saddle

no bigger than a soup plate. That lad Dick Goodwin is a fineish horseman, I fancy; at all events he is bred right, and I have heard several times that he always cuts out the work at home with his father's hounds."

Now Dick Goodwin had but just joined the regiment; indeed, had not yet finished his recruit's drill. Cis had received a letter from the lad's father, who was an old friend of his, asking him to befriend him, and in no better hands could any youngster have been placed. For when a man rides straight, shoots straight, and is, in fact, a good all round man, as was Cis, added to which he lived straight, never said an unkind word of his neighbour, and was always ready to do a good turn to anyone; when a man bears such a reputation as that, he is bound to command the respect and esteem of his fellow men.

Young Goodwin was, as it happened, a good bit better than the average amateur horseman. He had been at it all his life, and though he had had but little practice in actual race riding, he had ridden scores of gallops while reading for the service, as his tutor lived within a couple of miles of that prince of cross country trainers, the late Mr. Fothergill Rowlands.

We need not dwell much on the events of the

next few weeks; suffice it to say that Garryowen kept perfectly sound for the first two months of his training, and Cis began to think it was about time to put somebody on his back who would catch him by the head and bustle him along a little. So one day he and Dick Goodwin arrived at Lachine, Goodwin riding a nice thoroughbred horse of Mr. Owen's. Cis had arranged with Mr. Bawtry that he should send a lad to look after the horses, under Michael's superintendence; and as there was a spare box next to Garryowen's, there was no difficulty as to putting up another horse.

"I fear you will consider me by no means a welcome guest on this occasion, Miss Bawtry," said Cis, as he entered the room; "but I have brought Mr. Goodwin here in order to introduce him to his mount in the Grand Military! He has brought a charming horse for you to ride, and I want you to lead Garryowen in his work, if you will be so kind as to do so."

We may here mention that Cis had made arrangements with Mr. Bawtry's tenant, close to, by which he could get a capital plough gallop, a mile and a half round, and here, as the grass was uncommonly hard going, it had been decided to train Garryowen.

"I want you to be so kind as to get on to this horse, and see how you like him. It is absurd to expect you to give up Garry without a murmur, and if you could only ride him in the race, nobody should get on his back but yourself."

"Well," said Helen, "as that is impossible, you may consider yourself forgiven this time."

Cis and Dick Goodwin stayed the night, and next morning, early, Helen, on her new horse, led Dick Goodwin and Garryowen a nice three-parts speed gallop. She was charmed with her mount, and, indeed, he was a delightful horse to ride, just what a light weight man would give any reasonable sum for as a covert hack in a galloping country. His manners were perfect; he could go a rare pace; jumped into his bridle the instant you gave him the office; and was a clean bred un. In fact, if Cis had had the pick of all the best stables at home, he could hardly have suited himself better.

After an early breakfast, the pair drove back in time for parade. On their way into Montreal, they met Ronald riding up to Lachine. He had just come off guard, and so had the whole day before him. By this time he had become hopelessly in love with Sybil, and seized every possible opportunity of being with her. She, too,

had begun to find out what a really good fellow this spoilt dandy was, and how wonderfully he had improved of late. One great object of his visit to-day, was to enlist the sympathies of Helen Bawtry in his favour. He showed considerable acuteness in this line of conduct, as he argued, not without reason, that, even supposing Helen would not actually give him her assistance in his *affaire*, still she would, at all events, remain neutral if he took her into his confidence.

Helen, too, had gradually got to like him very much; and as he played and sang well, and was altogether a particularly nice man in a house, both the girls and Mr. Bawtry looked forward with pleasure to his visits.

He found Helen alone in the drawing-room, and at once made a clean breast of it, at the same time asking her whether she thought there was any chance for him in the event of his urging his suit.

"I don't think you have a ghost of a chance at present, Mr. Ronald," said she. "I will be perfectly frank with you. Sybil has got to like you very much indeed, and I was only thinking so last night. Yet I feel quite sure that she is at present heart-whole, and you would do your cause much harm. She is too undisguisedly glad to see you,

and altogether too free from embarrassment in your society, to have any feelings for you beyond those of the merest friendship. Take my advice and wait; of course I have been quite sure of the state of your feelings for some time. I won't promise to fight your battles for you, but you may rest assured that I will do or say nothing to prejudice your cause."

With this Ronald was obliged to content himself, and he was fain to admit on reflection, that things might have been on a very much worse footing.

"How did you like your ride?" said Cis to Goodwin, as they bowled along the beautiful road into Montreal.

"Very much, indeed," said he; "he reminds me a lot of a horse that I used to ride in his work; he carries his head in just about the same place, and is just as lazy, I should think. I love a lazy horse, they have always got a bit left, when your pulling, tearing beggars are done to a turn. Fairish fettle, too, he is in, for the time that he has been in work. Rummy-looking fore-legs, aren't they? but they'll stand a preparation, I think."

"They'll stand, right enough," said Cis; "they filled a bit the first three or four weeks in the stable, but that was only natural."

"Well, if he fences as well as you say he does, and can only stay like the horse I mentioned, he will take a lot of beating. By the way, what a nailing good horsewoman Miss Bawtry is! She steered Owen's horse beautifully at the turns."

"Yes, she is a fine horsewoman, and that little horse suits her down to the ground. Owen is a rare judge, he never has a bad one."

Chapter XVII.

"A MESSAGE FROM OVER THE SEA."

When they arrived at barracks the English mail had just arrived, and Cis found, among other letters, a long one from Lady Grenville.

She and Cis had corresponded fairly regularly; but, as she always mentioned Edith Hamilton in her letters, they only opened afresh the wounds which were so tardily healing.

Cis Poynter was a very different man from the light-hearted, cheery fellow that we knew in India and at home, and for months after he joined at Montreal he had associated comparatively little with his brother officers. They all liked him, for he was a man whom to know was to like, but they felt that there was a past, the pages of which he would on no account have read by any eyes. Until he had become so interested in Garryowen, he had not owned a hair in the tail of anything that could gallop. Had any of his old brother officers come across him, they would indeed have been astonished.

He had hitherto taken so little interest in racing out in Canada, that none of the garrison had any idea how thoroughly well versed he was in all the lore of the game. He had set his heart on winning this race, if possible; and, taking into account the horse's antecedents, he felt sure that if he were only good enough to win, it would be possible to back him to land a biggish stake. Though as straight as a gun-barrel, like all men who have raced and lost heavily, as he had in his early days, he liked to win a good stake when his colours were successful.

He therefore meant to have Garryowen as fit as hands could make him, and if his old legs would only stand, he was bound to come to the post as fit as anything else in the race. He had an excellent man to look after him in old Michael, and as Dick Goodwin could ride as well as any of them, he thought his chance a fairly rosy one.

Cis had no time to read his letters before parade, not indeed till late in the day, as he was president of a court-martial, in which the prisoner was a "bit of a lawyer," as it is called in the service, and a precious lot of bother these lawyers give, too. He had a big budget, and kept Lady Grenville's till the last, as he always half-feared the contents of her letters.

She told him that Edith Hamilton, who had been abroad during the whole winter and spring, had, since she returned, been far from well.

"You would be deeply grieved to see her," said she. "All her roses are fled, and with them her spirits have also taken flight. It is heart-breaking to see the dear girl wandering aimlessly about, with her hidden sorrow eating out her heart. She is brave enough before others, but does not attempt to deceive me. She could not if she tried."

This made Cis wretched; he had of late begun to think that (believing, as he did, that Edith was fond of him, and that if had asked her the all-important question, she would have answered as he would wish) he had really far better have pocketed his pride, distasteful though it was, and saved her and himself all this misery. He half made up his mind to apply for leave at once and let the Grand Military slide; indeed had he only had himself to consider, he would undoubtedly have done so. When, however, he bethought himself of Owen and Bawtry, the girls, and Dick Goodwin, he felt that he must see it out.

Time slipped away, the entries for the Grand Military were due, and amongst them appeared

Captain Poynter's brown gelding "Garryowen," aged.

"Why, Poynter," said the Colonel next day, as he read over the entries, "I did not think that you took the least interest in racing or chasing either."

"Well, sir," said he, "there is not much sport to be got out here, and as I took rather a fancy to this horse, I bought him from Owen and entered him for the big race. The corps ought to be represented, and I must try to bring the cup home to us."

"I sincerely hope that you may, but I suppose you are aware that this animal of yours has been trying to earn a winning bracket for three or four years, without anything like approaching to success."

"He always breaks down when they begin to wind him up, doesn't he?" said the Colonel, turning to Graham of the Hussars, who was standing by.

"I should like to lay against him, sir, at all events," said he.

Graham was in the habit of making a book on most races of any importance, and was not afraid of peppering an unsound one.

"Don't want to take a long shot about him, do you?" said he.

"Certainly not," said Cis, "time enough within a day or two of the race if his old understandings keep all right till then."

Cis had tried every phase of the backing business and had come to the conclusion that in a case like this he had better take five to one at the fall of the flag, than fifty to one with all the uncertainties ahead of him. He was quite convinced that nobody else would back the horse, and as it was more than probable that barely half those entered would put in an appearance on the day of the race, he felt sure that his horse would be considered one of those least likely to pay up the final sweep of five pounds.

Nearer and nearer drew the eventful day, and the backers of Mark, Latitude, and Rosebud, were very fond indeed.

To the surprise of most people, Garryowen figured in the list as having paid up the final fiver.

"The course is a big one," said Cis, "he is a good fencer, and if he doesn't break down he may land the fifty for second money at all events."

The public, however, would not have Garryowen at any price, and until the night before the race, when Cis Poynter electrified the ante-room by taking seven hundreds in one hand, we don't

think there was a solitary farthing invested on the horse. They had asked him two questions, the first of which he had answered by no means satisfactorily.

Chapter XVIII.

ASKING QUESTIONS.

"Won't you have either whip or persuaders?" said Cis to Dick Goodwin, as he got up. "Just to let him know you have them, eh?"

"Oh, I don't think he wants them," said he. "He is a bit lazy, but I fancy that if he is shaken up, and has something to bring him along, he will do us a pretty good gallop."

The horse had gone on as well as his best friends could possibly desire, as, though the ground had become like iron, the plough gallop, which was kept well harrowed, afforded excellent going.

It was arranged that Helen should jump off with him, and take him along for the first half of the journey on Mr. Owen's horse, and that the lad should bring him home with a mare of Dick Goodwin's that had won a couple of hurdle races, and was really smart.

Much to the disgust of all concerned, the old horse let the mare do him pretty comfortably.

"This will win no Grand Military," said Cis. "The old beggar doesn't blow much either."

"I rammed my heels in," said Dick Goodwin, and hollered at him, as you know, but he did not take the least notice of it."

"Well," said Owen, at last, "this is too bad to be true, I am positive of that. We must try him again about ten days before the race, and put a pair of spurs on. You must wake him up with a cutting whip, Mr. Goodwin."

This suggestion was acted upon.

"Now, don't spare him," said Owen, as they walked down to the start. "Let him know that you have got them on, and hit him once with the whip. Unless I am much mistaken, he will tell you a very different story this time."

When the mare picked him up and seemed inclined to be able to hold him as she had before, Dick Goodwin sent the spurs in and hit him twice. The effect was electrical. The old horse shook his head, bounded into his bridle, and taking charge of his rider, ran clean away from the mare, coming home all by himself; in fact, it took Dick all his time to steady him.

This was a real great gallop, for he finished up the rise like a lion, and would hardly have blown a candle out.

"I couldn't believe he was the same horse," said Dick. "Lord how he pulled! The old

thief never tried a yard last time," said he, patting his neck, as he led him gently about, after having loosed his girths. "We shall win, bar accidents."

"Do you really think so?" said Helen.

"I do indeed, I never rode a better four-mile gallop in my life, and never felt a horse finish so strong. He came at the right end, as we say in turf parlance."

Both Cis and Owen were delighted. They both recognised how grand a gallop the horse had done.

"We will ease him a bit now," said Cis. "We musn't leave the race on the training ground. We will flatter the old chap, and with luck he will come to the post like an indiarubber ball."

"Right you are," said Owen. "If you and I only had a tithe of the money that has been left on training grounds, we should be millionaires."

The two breakfasted with Mr. Bawtry, and after a visit to the stables, where they found the horse standing fair on all four legs, and going into his feed with a will, they drove back to Montreal.

"We had better back him now," said Owen.

"Not just yet, please," said Cis. "Leave it

to me; I will guarantee to back him to win us a couple of thousand within twenty-four hours of the race."

"All right," said Owen, "Of course I shall leave it to you, as he is your horse, and most thankful I am that he has fallen into such good hands. I never saw him looking anything like he is now; no horse will stirp fitter."

What is there much more delightful than the pleasure we get in anticipation, when we have got our horse sound, fit, and well, and with a nice pull in the weights to boot? It matters not; he may, when the race has become a thing of the past, be beaten to smithereens; never mind, that can't affect the past, we had at least the pleasure of winning in anticipation.

Half the pleasure of a horse owner is obtained on the training ground. How delightful to see your horses do their work on a lovely morning, and not only your own, but other people's as well! We have inhaled the morning air, we have seen so-and-so do a real good gallop, we feel certain that he will win such-an-such a race, and we have even backed him, in imagination seen him win, and spent half the money already. There is no doubt about it, those of a sanguine temperament and vivid imagination do get a lot

more pleasure out of life than their more matter-of-fact brethren. Down come the castles about their ears, but at it they go again. Better luck next time, say they.

Chapter XIX.

HOW WE BEAT THE FAVOURITE.

At length dawned the all-eventful day. Cis, as he shaved that morning, could not but confess that he was uncommon keen to win. It would be such a triumph to land the race with a horse so very low in the estimation of the public, and, indeed, of the best judges of steeplechasing. He was not even quoted in the betting the day before.

In every mess-house, coffee-room, hotel-bar, and in many private houses, the one topic of conversation was the Grand Military. The *Herald* reviewed the probable chances of the various competitors, and after a short *resumé* of their previous performances, concluded by tipping Mark, Latitude, and Rosebud to fill the first three situations. Poor old Garryowen's pretensions were dismissed with the following laconic sentence :—

"This horse has yet to win his maiden race, and as he is already an aged horse, and has invariably either fallen, or broken down before the various races for which he has been entered, we may dismiss his case as hopeless."

Cis smiled, and pointed out the paragraph to Dick Goodwin as they sat at breakfast. The day was perfect, the rain had ceased overnight, and a light breeze tempered the rays of the autumn sun, which in Canada is uncommonly hot, and which lighted up the various exquisite tints of the maple leaves, now resplendent in all their glorious autumn raiment.

Nowhere in the world can you see such lovely colouring as in Canada in the month of October. The course was on the Lachine Road, within three miles, in fact, of Mr. Bawtry's place, and great had been the preparations made by our good-natured and hospitable friend for the event. The Grand Military was the occasion on which he always entertained right royally.

He had a marquee erected near the winning-post, where a luncheon was laid for all comers, and where the best of everything was to be obtained. The best of everything being just about good enough for the army, the army to a man drew this cosy little covert more than once during the day, and right well it invariably responded to the tax upon its resources.

Montreal turned out its thousands. *Cela va sans dire*, and many were the fair faces to be

seen in landau, wagonette, and barouche *en route* for the course.

This lay on the gently sloping side of a hill. It was a little more than two miles round, so that in the big race the horses started about a quarter-of-a-mile past the temporary grand stand.

The first and second fences were downhill, then they turned to the left and had a lot of fencing along the bottom, then to the left again, and up the hill, turning into the straight about five hundred yards from the winning-post. There were twenty-one fences in the four miles, and one or two real big ones. It was essentially a course that must be jumped, as the fences, though not unfairly big, were stiff, and it was not safe to take liberties with them, as many had, ere this, found to their cost.

Cis no sooner arrived on the course than he made his way to the paddock where the cognoscenti were assembled in great force. He knew one or two of the big betting men by sight, and Bawtry, who always had his wager, pointed out to him the others.

"Do you see that lame man there?" said he, as a tall man with a crutch entered the ring and made towards the stand. "He is good for a thousand if you win it from him. That red-

headed fellow there is from Albany, he makes a big book and will lay you as good a price as anybody else. Come, I will introduce you to them."

So saying he took him by the arm and they soon were in the thick of it.

"How do you do, Mr. Bawtry? I hope you have not come to back another Senator," said one. "I have not forgotten how you knocked a hole clean through the bottom of my book, when you backed him at the last moment to win you four hundred, and I hadn't laid a penny against him till then."

"No such luck for me I fear, Mr. Beck, but here is a gentleman who wants to back his own for a bit. Allow me to introduce to you Captain Poynter."

"Happy to make your acquaintance, Captain. What can I do for you? Ah, I see your horse is Garryowen," said he, glancing at his card. "I have not laid him yet, and I certainly don't mean to miss him. I can lay you eight ponies, sir."

"Make it fifties, Mr. Beck, and I will take it."

"I will toss you which it is, sir. Heads I lay it in ponies, tails I do it in fifties."

Up went the coin and it came down tails.

Cis promptly booked it. "£50 to £400 Garryowen. Beck."

"Now come on," said Bawtry, "to Greaves."

"Mr. Greaves, let me introduce Captain Poynter, he wishes to back his horse with you."

"Delighted to do business with any friend of yours, Mr. Bawtry."

"What will you lay Garryowen?" said Cis.

"Let me see," said he. "I don't think I have laid it yet. No. Well, sir, I will lay you seven to one."

"I have just taken eight fifties from Beck."

"Ah well, sir, if Beck has laid you eights, I suppose I might follow suit; put it down, sir." Down went another £50 to £400.

"Have you got enough now?" said Bawtry.

"Well, I've backed the horse to win me fifteen hundred already. I stand to lose two hundred, but I mean to have a bit more on yet. I'll get it all on at once and have done with it. Ah, here's a man I lost a bit to over this very race last year. Good day, Mr. Hill!"

"Good day to you, sir. Anything I can do for you?"

"Yes, I want to back my own for the big race."

"What is it, sir?"

"Garryowen."

"Why, let me see. Didn't I lay you the horse last year for the very same race?"

"You did," said Cis.

"Well, I don't know what his price is, nobody has offered to back him yet."

"I have taken eight to one already."

"I have laid nothing but Mark, Latitude, and Rosebud; if some outsider will only crop up and bowl them all over, it will be a really good race for us layers. They take two to one Mark, four to one Latitude, and a shade longer odds Rosebud. They won't have anything else, in fact I shall be surprised if Mark does not start an even-money favourite. I shouldn't like to back him at that price, I know. Four miles, and a jumping race. They *will* have him though."

"Well, what will you lay?"

"Seven to one, and no more, sir."

"Put it down in fifties."

"Right, sir."

And they both booked it.

"Is your horse well, sir?" said Hill.

"Yes, he is," said Cis.

"Thank you, sir."

"He ain't no fool, I can see," said the bookmaker as Cis turned away. "I ain't going to lay any more against Garryowen."

Cis took seven ponies once more and then shut his betting-book, quite satisfied with what he had done.

By this time people began to talk, and it soon got noised about that Poynter had backed Garryowen to win him over two thousand pounds.

"More fool he," said the majority.

"Must know something," said a few.

The first item on the card was the Maiden Hurdle Race, won by Graham's horse, and as he was the least fancied of the quintette, his owner won a nice little stake over him.

"By the way, Poynter," said he, when Cis congratulated him on his success. "I hear that you have actually backed Garryowen to win you about fifteen hundred more since you came on to the course."

"Quite true, and now that I have got my money on, let me advise you to take as little as five to one, and back him too."

"But what grounds have you for thinking that your horse can beat this favourite Mark?"

"Well, Garryowen would have at all events been upsides with him last year, if he had not met with an accident, and he is not only stones a better horse now than he was then, but he meets him on *twenty-four pounds* better terms. It is a

tremendous lot over four miles of country, mind you."

"It is indeed," said Graham. "How does your horse fence?"

"Magnificently, and if Mark is brought along the last mile and a half with his big weight up, he will fall. I would rather bet an even hundred that he fell, than back him to win at long odds. I know the public think that he can't lose, but I watched his finish last year, and I quite expect to beat him handsomely."

Graham went away, determined to get back some of his money at all events, and so impressed was he by what Cis had told him, that he actually backed Garryowen to win him five hundred pounds, at prices ranging from five to one, down to a hundred to thirty.

Still the public literally piled the money on to Mark, and when the course was cleared for the big race, Mark was an even-money favourite, Latitude stood at three to one wanted, and Rosebud and Garryowen were equally backed at a shade longer odds. Any price might have been procured about the rest of the field.

There were ten horses coloured on the card. The conditions were as follows:

"The Canadian Grand Military Steeplechase

of Three Hundred Sovereigns and a Cup to be held for one year, added to a sweepstakes of five sovereigns for starters, for horses the *boná fide* property of, and to be ridden by officers of the army quartered in Canada. Four miles over a fair hunting country. Four-year-olds, 10st. 3lb.; five-year-olds, 11st. 8lb.; six-year-olds and aged, 12st. 3lb. A winner of any hurdle-race or steeplechase value £50, to carry 3lb. extra, of any hurdle-race or steeplechase value £100, 7lb. extra, of £200 or of the Grand Military in any previous year, 10lb. extra. Aged horses that have never won a race up to the time of starting, allowed 14lb. Entrance £3 to go to the fund, second horse to receive £50 out of the stake, third horse to save his stake."

Dick Goodwin had weighed out before the second race, and had taken his saddle, bridle, and breast-plate up to a barn about four hundred yards from the grand stand, where the faithful Michael was in attendance with Garryowen.

"Now, then," said Cis, after the finish of the race before the Grand Military, "come along, and get up. Now, look here, last year this horse lost the race because a brute fell in front of him and brought him down; I mean Skyscraper. Give the beggar a wide berth this time. Get away,

bang in front, and keep there over the first three or four fences, at all events, unless something is making running at an altogether false pace; in that case, let the old horse stride along within himself, they will soon come back to you. I don't think there will be more than four in it after half the journey is over. Latitude is the only one that has the least chance of extending you at the finish. Mark can't stay, Rosebud can, but it is at her own pace, and that will never trouble you. Now, remember," said he, as he chucked him into the saddle, "you have got the best and fittest horse in the race under you; the faster they run it, the better it will suit you. Use your head, and don't get flurried. You have stones up your sleeve, and you are on two hundred to nothing. How much would you like, Owen?" said he, as they walked back to the stand.

"Can you spare the odds to, say, seventy-five pounds?" asked Mr. Owen in reply.

"Of course I can; you are on the average odds to seventy-five pounds. Now, let's get on to the box of Bawtry's big carriage. I promised the girls I would go there, so as to tell them how things were going during the race."

By this time the horses were out, Mark, as he

strode down, shaking his head and pulling hard, looking splendid; and most people thought that the race was over,—certainly they backed him as though they did. Latitude and Rosebud, too, looked right well, and the former swung over the hurdle in beautiful form, and was away like ightning on the other side.

"That Latitude is a good horse, I am sure," said Cis; "how quick he jumps!"

"Yes," said Owen, "I wish I were as sure of winning outright as I am that he can lick Mark at even weights wherever they meet. He is the only one I fear."

"Ditto," said Cis. "But I am not much afraid; he goes like a horse that likes to hear his feet rattle. The holding ground just suits old Garry."

Last of all came Garryowen, with his nose almost on the ground. He cocked his ears, though, as he neared the hurdle, and bounded over it like a stag. How well that old deceiver looks, was the opinion expressed by more than one good judge, who knew when a horse had undergone a thorough preparation.

"Well, ladies," said Cis, "how many pairs of gloves do you stand to win or lose?"

"I don't know," said Sybil; "I know that I

have backed him with half the garrison. Captain Graham has laid me twenty pairs to one; and I am afraid to say how many pairs we have got on," said she, turning to Ronald.

Relations had altered considerably between those two, and she now found herself looking anxiously forward to his appearance, and yet, when he did come, she would often absent herself from the drawing-room for a long time after his arrival. She found herself blushing too, when her eye caught his, and very angry she was when she found that the symptoms increased rather than diminished. Helen had come to the conclusion that Ronald could conduct his own case, and that any assistance from her would be quite superfluous.

As to herself, she was, on this particular day, in very low spirits, and, as the author is naturally behind the scenes, he can inform our readers that he is not the least astonished thereat.

You see, she and Dick Goodwin had been together a great deal during the last two months. Twice or three times a week he had been out at Lachine, and had never failed to spend from Saturday to Monday there.

One great bond of union was their love for horses and everything connected with them.

Dick would spin yarns by the hour about horses and hounds at home. Helen had never hunted with a pack of foxhounds; there was a scratch pack at Montreal, but the hunting was a miserable apology for sport. She longed to sail along over an English grass country.

"Small blame to her," you will say. "Is there anything in the world to equal the sensation of skimming o'er the grass on a clean bred one, with a good scent, having got away almost on hounds' backs?"

It was, then, only natural that being thrown together so much they should each get very fond of the other's society, and as Helen reflected that after to-day there would be no reason for Dick's visits in future, or at all events they would occur at much greater intervals, she felt very low indeed.

But to the Race. The horses had by this time all mustered at the starting-post.

"They are off," said Cis, and the roar that went up from the assembled multitude re-echoed his words. Cis had a first-rate pair of glasses, and proceeded to detail the various phases of the race.

"Our horse and Rosebud are in front. Mark is lying fifth, with Latitude at his girths."

"That's right, Dick, go along, it is no effort to a horse to gallop down-hill."

"What's that going through his horses now?" said Owen; "look, he is almost level with Rosebud! See, he is first at the fence."

"And first down, too," said Cis, with a sigh of relief, as he saw the horse gallop riderless away, and, thanks to his glasses, made sure that his rider was unhurt.

"I am glad he is out of the way; that is Skyscraper, the thing that fell in front of Garryowen last year. That is about the stiffest fence of the lot, and I don't believe he rose a foot."

Meanwhile the others were slipping along, and, as they swept round the bottom turn, the order was but little changed, except that the Greyling, a horse belonging to one of the Gunners, had taken a prominent position, and was, in fact, only half a length behind Garryowen, who in turn, let Rosebud lead him a length.

"That grey horse goes well," said Cis, "but I doubt his standing up the whole journey; he has a very nasty leg, and went quite short in his canter."

But little change occurred in the position of the leaders all along the bottom stretch, though two of the "Ragged Division" fell at the big bank, over which Mark pecked slightly on landing.

There were now seven left in it, and as they came up the hill Cis arrived at the conclusion that about four would compass the course at the outside. Past the stand they thundered, and over the water: a sheet would have covered Rosebud, Garryowen, and the Greyling, with Mark and Latitude three lengths off, but going apparently strong and well. Then, *longo intervallo*, the other two. They were by this time completely out of it, but as a race is never lost till it is won, especially one in which your money is so often in the air, they persevered religiously.

Down the hill they went, and Dick Goodwin sending Garryowen along directly they rounded the turn quickly placed three or four lengths between himself and his nearest attendants.

"Quite right," said Cis; "how well that lad rides! bred to it, it is bound to come out."

Along the bottom they went, Garryowen still leading a couple of lengths, and taking his field along a rare cracker.

"Why he's riding Mark already," said Cis.

"He is, by jove," said Owen.

It was too true. The pace at which the race was being run, together with the holding condition of the ground, had told on the top weight, and to his dismay, his rider found that, if he meant to live

with the leaders, he must call upon his horse. Mark answered like the good game horse that he was, and went right up to his horses directly he was called upon.

They raced at the big bank, Garryowen jumping it best of the lot. Latitude and Rosebud got over, but Mark fell on landing.

The Greyling jumped the bank, but broke down hopelessly on the other side.

From this point the race needs but little description; Dick took a pull at Garryowen up the hill, but found that the others got on no better terms with him. On arriving at the top, as he turned into the straight, he shook the old horse up, determined not to be caught napping by Latitude.

"It's all over," said Cis, as he lowered his glasses, "our horse walks in;" and, despite the desperate efforts of Lance on Latitude, who got every possible ounce out of his horse, Garryowen sailed home a ridiculously easy winner, passing the post fully four lengths to the good. Rosebud saved her stake.

The win was a godsend to the bookmakers, as, had Mark won, it would have hit them very hard indeed. As it was they had, many of them, not written the winner's name at all, and so had a skinner.

"Look at Owen," said Cis, as the old gentleman was seen to rush to Garry's head, catch hold of the bridle and lead him triumphantly back to scale. "There goes the proudest man in Canada, bar none."

"And I know who is the proudest woman," said Helen; "dear old Garry!"

"And dear Dick Goodwin," whispered Sybil in her ear.

Like lightning it flashed through Helen's mind. Sybil had struck the key-note, this was what made her so wretched, she loved him. But how had Sybil found it out almost before she knew it herself?

"What nonsense you talk!" said she, blushing scarlet meanwhile.

A move was now made for the marquee, where the winner's health was drunk amid great rejoicing.

"Here comes the hero of the day," said Mr. Bawtry, as Dick Goodwin, who bore his honours very modestly, entered the tent.

"You rode a beautiful race," said he, shaking him warmly by the hand; "Helen and yourself have been amply rewarded for all the trouble you have taken with the old horse."

Helen could not say a word, her heart was too

full, but as Dick raised his glass to his lips, their eyes met for one brief moment, and he read in hers something that made him happier by far than the fact of having won the race. "Who knows," said he to himself, "but I may pull off the double event ere the day is over?"

"Now listen," said Mr. Bawtry, "the stable and its followers have got to dine with me to-night, I don't care what other engagements they have, they must let them all slide."

"You will come, Owen?" as the old gentleman entered the marquee.

"With pleasure."

"Poynter, Goodwin, of course you will come. Ronald is booked already." Cis and Dick accepted without hesitation.

"We will have a great night," said Bawtry.

Chapter XX.

THE DOUBLE EVENT.

Some three or four hours later a very cheery party assembled round the table at the Hermitage, and as the cook was an *artiste* the dinner was as usual faultless.

The cup which had been borne triumphantly home in Mr. Owen's arms, was filled more than once, and as a natural consequence was as often emptied.

Cis was very well satisfied with the result of the day's racing. He had bet on no other race, and, what was best of all, Garryowen had walked home as sound as the day he was foaled.

"What a real good thing it was," said he, as after the girls left them they discussed the race in all its bearings for the tenth time.

"Good thing!" answered Owen. "There is not a horse in the Dominion that can beat him four miles at even weights, and with such a pull as he had to-day, he could have fallen, and then won. Why ever didn't we back him down to level money?"

Ah, why! Was there ever a race yet when we were not dissatisfied with the amount for which we backed the winner?

On the other hand, we are inclined to forget the innumerable occasions on which the wrong horse has won, and when we ought to have been very thankful that our stake was no bigger.

"I'm satisfied, at all events," said Bawtry.

So earnestly were these three talking over the events of the day, that they none of them had noticed the disappearance of Ronald and Goodwin. Curiously enough, though neither had of course said a word to the other on the subject, they had both determined to try their luck on this particular evening.

Ronald was the first to slip away, which he did very soon after the ladies had taken their departure.

He found Sybil standing over the fire, and Helen at the piano. After two or three minutes conversation, Helen made an excuse to absent herself, and so left the pair alone.

As she entered the Hall, Dick Goodwin appeared from the dining-room.

"I say, Miss Bawtry, let us go and see dear old Garry!"

"Oh yes, do let us. Ask James for some bread for him while I run up for a shawl."

Very comfortable they found the hero of the day, littered down to the knees and hocks, and munching away at his hay, which, however, he left in a hurry as Helen entered the box, knowing full well, that, pretend as she might to have come without it, there was a *bonne bouche* secreted somewhere about her.

"I must just have a look at his old legs," said Dick. "Will you hold the lanthorn?" and so saying, he proceeded to unroll the bandages which Michael had put on as bandages should be put on. There is an art in putting them on properly, novices at the performance being prone to forget that each succeeding fold tightens the one beneath, the consequence often being that circulation is impeded, and, instead of benefit, damage accrues.

"Oh dear," said he, as he replaced the bandages, after having satisfied himself that, if required, the horse was fit to run the race over again next day, "how I wish it were two months ago. What fun we have had, haven't we?"

"We have indeed," said Helen, "It's all over now! No more long talks about hunting and sport at home, and all sorts of things."

This bringing no response, Dick looked up, to

see her looking down on him with eyes brimming over with tenderness and tears, and even as he looked, one escaped and stole silently down her cheek.

"Are you ill?" said he, springing to his feet. No answer! she could only shake her head.

"Are you then so sorry that the delicious rides are a thing of the past?" Still no answer! If you had given her a king's ransom Helen could not have spoken a word.

"I know one way by which we could have lots of rides together for as long as we liked, but I fear you would not agree to it. Would you, I wonder?"

And then as she said ne'er a word with her lips, but bent her head towards him, with eyes full of love, Dick just popped his arm round her waist, and raising her lips to his, gave her one long impassioned kiss.

Even still no word from her, but as she only clung to him, and let her head drop on to his shoulder, Dick took it for granted he might repeat the dose, which he did, quite regardless of the fact that there was another gentleman looking on all the time, albeit with a pair of gentle eyes that seemed to say, "All right, I am

a most discreet Gooseberry. I will keep it dark."

So unobtrusive, in fact, were his movements, that (when Helen did find her tongue, and Dick and she told each other all about it, and when each first began to love the other, &c., as lovers have, do, and will, as long as the world goes round) they entirely forgot his presence. Time, as is usual on similar occasions, literally flew.

"Good gracious," said Helen. "It is past half-past ten, what on earth will they think? Good-night, Garry dear, I am fonder of you than ever, for if it hadn't been for you, I shouldn't have got somebody else," said she, looking slyly at Dick.

I wonder what Dick did then.

There is an unguessable conundrum for the reader. Shan't tell you the answer.

Luckily for them, on arriving at the house they found that the trio had just that minute entered the drawing-room.

Helen made straight to the piano and proceeded to play in a desultory fashion.

It was late ere the vehicles of the visitors rolled away. Late as it was, however, the two girls found time to hold a confab in Helen's room before they retired to rest.

"I thought that you and Mr. Goodwin had eloped," said Sybil, as soon as they were cosily ensconced each in a low wicker arm-chair, in front of a bright fire.

Of course the author knows nothing except from hearsay, but he *has heard* that there is nothing the ladies love so much as this wonderfully *elastic* ten minutes, be the time of night what it may.

"Not so selfish as to spoil sport, my dear," said Helen. "Come, out with it. I can see that you are simply brimming over with news. Am I to congratulate you?"

"Yes, darling, you may. I am so happy!"

"I am delighted," said Helen. "We can both be married on the same day."

"What?" said Sybil. "Really I *am* glad. I felt sure that it would come, but somehow I did not expect it yet. I only found you out to-day, and I was not at all sure about him."

Long did the two girls prolong their sitting, and it was much past the witching hour when they said their final good-nights.

After breakfast, next morning, they confided their joint secret to Mr. Bawtry.

His astonishment was ludicrous to behold.

He was one of those men who never saw any-

thing of that sort, and he had been in blissful ignorance of the little game that had been going on under his very eyes. It had never entered his head that the girls were really grown-up or marriageable.

When he did find his tongue he said, "Well, I never anticipated anything like this. But, Helen my dear, your young man is a very young man indeed."

"He will soon get better of that, daddy dear. Besides, he will have all the more time to grow like you, and until he does, he cannot of course be quite perfect in my eyes."

"Ah, you rogue," said he, you are your dear mother over again, you might have kissed the Blarney stone almost."

"But what am I to do, my dears? I shall be miserable all alone here."

"That you shall never be," said Sybil. "We will make them promise that either Frank and I or Mr. Goodwin and Helen shall always be with you."

Dear me! how glibly the "Frank" comes.

Well, well! it's the same old story.

"I like them both very much indeed, I am thankful to say; but if you want to make them promise that one pair of turtle doves shall always

be here, you must make them swear to it by all they hold sacred before the knot is tied."

"Sorry you have such a bad opinion of your own sex, dear," said Helen.

"Worsted again, oh dear! Well, here is my blessing, and may every happiness be yours," said he, kissing them both; and then the dear old boy got very red in the face, and walked off to his study, with a big lump in his throat.

Chapter XXI.

"TALLY HO! BACK!"

Ere the Grand Military had ceased to be talked about, consequently, in less than nine days after its decision, Cis received, by the same mail, two letters, the contents of which had the effect of making him retrace his steps with just as much alacrity as he had displayed in getting away from home, rather more than a year ago.

We append copies of the letters. *Place aux dames*, and here, therefore, is Lady Grenville's.

"My dear Captain Poynter.—The time has at last arrived, when I fear I should be lacking in common humanity were I not to make every possible effort to bring you and Edith Hamilton together. I am quite sure that you love her with all your heart, and I am equally sure that I now know the reason why you left home in such a desperate hurry. If you value Edith's happiness, health, and I may almost say, *life*, come at once. Do not lose a day; she loves you, though

she can hardly think that you love her, after the way in which you have treated her.

"Her life is now hourly made a burthen to her, owing to the persecutions of a cousin, who has been up here for some time, and who has, *I know*, tried to poison her mind against you, insinuating that your sudden and unexplained departure from England was necessitated by some gambling transaction, out of which you did not come as creditably as you should. He has also, I fancy, introduced on to the scene, some imaginary lady in Montreal, with whose charms you are supposed to be very much smitten.

"Forgive an old woman for writing thus plainly, but my affection for Edith, and my great friendship for you, prompt me to do so.

"Your very affectionate friend,

"MARION GRENVILLE."

This letter simply galvanised Cis Poynter. He did not often swear, but we are bound to confess that on this occasion the recording angel had a rough time of it for a minute or two.

"Curse him! I'll go home at once, if it's only to hammer him within an inch of his dastardly life. Poor darling, I'll soon put a stop to this sort of thing. You shall not suffer long."

It is needless to say that the poor darling referred to quite a different person from the party that was promised a hammering.

After a few minutes he calmed down a little, and then, bethinking himself that there was still another letter, with the Kiltroon postmark on it, he proceeded to investigate its contents.

As we have given Lady Grenville's letter *in extenso*, we don't know that we can do better than pursue the same course with Sir Arthur Linton's, for from him was the second epistle.

It ran as follows—

"Dear Poynter.—I think that we are quite good enough friends to permit of my taking a very great interest in anything that pertains to your happiness, or the reverse. Having assumed this much, I mean to dig, bolt, or do anything by which I may be enabled to handle you. Lady Grenville and myself have put our two particularly wise heads together, and we have at last arrived at a definite conclusion, namely, that in the first place you love Edith Hamilton, and that in the second, you are fool enough to allow the fact of her having inherited a good fortune from her aunt, to ruin her happiness, as well as your own. It has taken us a long time to get at, but

nothing that you can ever say to the contrary will ever shake our belief in the fact, that we have at last run you and your folly fairly to ground. I know how often you have denounced heiress hunters, almost as criminals of the deepest dye; in fact, I always used to think that you were decidedly cracked on that particular subject, and on putting two and two together, I now remember that it was the very day after I dined with you, and told you about Edith's good fortune, that your plans were so suddenly altered. I cannot, therefore, knowing what a rum 'un you are, feel otherwise than quite positive that you have let this confoundedly stupid peculiarity of yours run clean away with you. I don't know that I should have written to you in this strain, strongly as I feel, were it not that Lady Grenville is worrying herself to death over the affair. Now do come back, like a good fellow, and cut them all down again. Magnum Bonum is yours at the price I paid for him under the hammer. I rode him nineteen days last season, and he never put a foot wrong. He is in rare nick.

"Yours ever,

"ARTHUR LINTON."

Cis read both these letters over a second time,

and then went straight to the Colonel's quarters, told him that it was of vital importance that he should at once proceed to England, and asked him whether, if he sent in his official request for three months leave he would recommend him.

"Certainly I will, Poynter, as it is really a case of most urgent private affairs, though some people will say that you have gone to spend your winnings. By-the-way, I have just heard from my cousin in India, she married a major in your old regiment—Brownlow, he has exchanged back to India."

"Indeed, sir, I am very glad to hear it, for he is as good a fellow as ever lived."

"Yes, she seems very happy indeed, but what made me mention it was this. Where did I put the letter? Ah, here it is. 'Roderick desires to be most affectionately remembered to his old friend Captain Poynter, who is now in your regiment. He says that I am to tell you always to back his horses if he is backing them himself, as he was the best steeplechase rider, and the finest judge in India.'"

"There, what do you think of that?"

"Why, that dear old Brownlow overrates both my horsemanship and my judgment, Colonel."

'I'd have chanced all that," said the chief, "if

I had only got this letter ten days ago. Stop a bit, there is a bit more about you, and as it is in a postscript, which always contains the cream of a lady's letter, it is bound to be important. She says, 'Roderick also wants to know whether Captain Poynter is still heart-whole, and does he remember a very pretty little widow up in the Hills? You are to tell him that she was inconsolable for a long time, but has at last consented to make Colonel Loring of the Engineers the happiest of men.'"

"And how is Garryowen?" asked the Colonel.

"No horse could be better, sir. Sound as a bell, and lively as a kitten. Do you know I am seriously thinking of taking him home, as it is more than likely that my private affairs will compel me either to leave the service, or, at all events, to stay in England for the present."

"You might do a great deal worse. How he would carry a man over Leicestershire. A good mare like Rosebud, too, would be well worth taking over, and she *is* for sale. Carlton offered her to Graham for seventy, last night at dinner. I should think they would take a horse home for about fifteen pounds."

"I don't really know," said Cis. "I am just going to see when the 'Moravian' sails. I fancy

it is on Saturday, and I shall ask what they charge for a horse. I am in luck, as I think she is the last boat that starts from here."

"Yes," said the Colonel, "we shall very soon have the St. Lawrence frozen over now."

After leaving his Colonel's quarters, Cis went to the shipping-office, and found that the "Moravian" sailed on Saturday, which, as this was Monday, gave him plenty of time to make his preparations. They informed him, that, though they charged twenty pounds for one horse, they would take two for thirty.

"I will take two," thought Cis. "If I can get hold of Rosebud, as she will be company for Garryowen, and no better fencer ever looked through a bridle."

Suffice it to say, that Rosebud was transferred to his stable, and shipped with Garryowen, whose departure caused great grief to Helen, Sybil, Michael, and last, but not least, Mr. Owen, all of whom were on board up to the last moment, wishing Cis and the old horse *bon voyage*.

"There are many more improbable things," said Owen, than that we shall meet in the old country, and that ere long."

"I am very glad to hear it."

"My only brother, who inherited the property,

was not content with that, but robbed me of all that made life worth living.

"She is dead, poor thing; and he is at this moment dying of an incurable malady, if he has not already gone to his last account. I swore that as long as he lived I would never set foot in England; that was thirty-four years ago. He has no child, and the property comes to me. I shall be glad to see the dear old place again, and nothing will please me so much as to see you there. My dream is to have Mr. and Mrs. Ronald, Mr. and Mrs. Goodwin, Bawtry, and yourself, all there together. I can give you some first-rate mixed shooting. Ah, there goes the whistle, I must look alive, or I shall have to come to Quebec, *nolens volens*."

A hearty handshake, and they parted.

Chapter XXII.

"LES ABSENTS ONT TOUJOURS TORT."

While the good ship "Moravian" is conveying Cis Poynter to England, we propose to take advantage of our ubiquity and place our readers *au courant* of the various events which culminated in the respective letters of Lady Grenville and Sir Arthur Linton.

This cousin of whom Lady Grenville wrote, had been a playfellow of Edith's from her earliest childhood, and in those days, years before they were in their teens even, they were solemnly engaged.

We have all played at the same game in turn. As years rolled on and the lad grew up, he did not by any means improve; his love for his cousin, however, no whit diminished. It never entered his head that she could ever care for anyone else, although she invariably laughed at and pooh-poohed any sentimentality on his part.

Two or three years before our story begins he went to Ceylon, coffee planting, and having mastered the details he invested his all, when

he came of age, in the island; there, as plenty of better men have done also, he lost it, every farthing.

He returned to England shortly after the death of Edith's aunt, and at once set to work to lay serious siege to his fair cousin.

Now, hitherto, Edith and he had been at least the best of friends, and gladly would she still have given him the affection of a sister; with this, however, he was, of course, not satisfied, and as he grew more and more importunate, and was staying in the house so that she was hourly exposed to his persecutions, she gradually began to positively dislike him.

He had on several occasions heard Cis Poynter's name mentioned as a great friend of the Hamiltons, and one night in the smoking-room of a house where he was staying he heard Cis's sudden departure discussed by a couple of youngsters, who after their second brandy and soda let their tongues wag a bit.

"Rum go that," said number one; "meant to sell only two of his horses, at the last moment changed his mind and let the lot go without any reserve whatever; they were all well known and fetched good prices, though. One was Matador, the horse that ran second for the big Hurdle Race at Croydon."

"I always heard," said number two, "that Miss Hamilton refused him. I know that she and her father were in town at the time, because I saw them with him at Tattersall's the day after the horses came up. At all events it was a very sudden move, as he exchanged at once and went out to Canada."

This set Waverley considering, and he began to think that if, as he feared, there was a rival in the field, he would have all his work cut out to secure the heiress.

As time went on he was fain to confess that he did not gain one inch of ground. He had on two or three occasions alluded to Cis Poynter in a casual way, and had at last become convinced that Edith cared for this man a great deal more than was expedient. He did not want to do Cis any harm, not he, but he brooded and brooded till his determination to win his cousin by hook or by crook became the sole absorbing subject of his thoughts. After a time he began to drop expressions when his name was mentioned, such as "poor devil," "bad business," and Edith bore it in silence as long as she could, but at last, one day in desperation she said—

"Charlie, you have always told me that there is nothing in the world you would not do to prove your affection for me."

"Only give me half a chance," he burst forth.

"Tell me, then, what has Captain Poynter done? or, rather, what is he said to have done? Lost a lot of money betting or what?"

"My dear Edith," he answered, jumping at this opportunity, "the exact nature of the transaction which caused Captain Poynter's sudden disappearance from England is, I believe, only known to very few."

We do not for one instant attempt to extenuate this cowardly conduct of Waverley's, but must explain to the reader that, goaded to madness by his cousin's treatment of him of late, coupled with his firm belief that Cis Poynter was the favoured rival, he became the prey of the green-eyed monster to such an extent that he cared not what he said.

Here was the idol of his soul, whom he had known and loved ever since they were both wee things in short frocks, and when he saw this prize, so valuable in his eyes in more ways than one, drifting away from him, her heart evidently the property of another, that other became in his estimation a fiend incarnate. He had brooded so long that he had at last come to think that Cis Poynter was deliberately robbing him of his, so to speak, lawful inheritance. When, therefore, Edith

actually broached the subject, he said more than in his calmer moments he would have dared to say.

"I know," said he, "that he was at a certain club at a late hour on the Tuesday night, or rather at a very early one on the Wednesday morning. He had brought up some horses which were to go up at Tattersall's on the following day, Thursday."

"I know all that," said Edith, and then, stopping short, "well, what then?"

"Really, if you are so well informed, it is hardly necessary for me to tell you anything." This with a sneer that enraged Edith beyond measure.

Edith was silent. She could have bitten her tongue out with rage and vexation. After a considerable pause, Waverley continued, in measured tones, though his voice trembled with suppressed rage.

"He disappeared from the scene on this very Wednesday; wrote to Tattersall telling him to sell the lot, literally without reserve (there were, I believe, one or two that he valued very highly); got leave pending an exchange, went away, and has never been seen since."

"And what harm was there in that, I should

like to know? Captain Poynter is and always, I hope, will be a *very* great friend of mine, and unless you can produce proof positive to the contrary, I shall always believe that, though his disappearance was, I grant, mysteriously sudden, yet there was nothing in it of which he need be the least atom ashamed."

Splendid she looked as she thus spoke up for the man she loved.

"Hoity toity," said Waverley, "sorry I spoke, I'm sure."

"What do you mean, then?" said Edith, fairly roused, and determined to pursue the subject to the bitter end. "Inuendos, hints, shrugs of the shoulders, and disparaging remarks such as you have indulged in of late, are, to say the least, unworthy of you; and I cannot sometimes persuade myself that it is my old playfellow, Charlie Waverley, who can condescend to strike a man behind his back,—which is exactly what you do when you asperse an absent man's character. That '*Les absents ont toujours tort*,' we unfortunately all know; but a systematic course of inuendo, such as you have lately pursued, is utterly foreign to the character which I always considered to be yours."

The more determined Edith became in defence

of Cis Poynter, the more did Waverley throw discretion to the winds. He saw now how utterly forlorn was his hope, and maddened by his cousin's evident partiality for his rival, he said far more than under ordinary circumstances he could have believed possible.

"Well," said he, at last, "if you will have it, he played cards on this particular night a bit too well for his adversaries; and though the affair was hushed up, and Captain Poynter was fortunate enough to negotiate an exchange, still the fact remains that that exchange was a positive necessity, and I for one shall be more than surprised to see him show his face in London again."

Very sick at heart did Edith feel when Waverley spoke thus explicitly; and though in her heart of hearts she could not and did not believe that her hero could be guilty, it made her very unhappy. It was unfortunately, too, the only way in which, as yet, his sudden departure had been accounted for.

It must be remembered that he had given no reason to anybody for his disappearance; not even to Lady Grenville had he opened his heart, and now when after all these months this explanation only was forthcoming, it filled her cup of sorrow to overflowing.

Like a veritable Spartan, however, did she receive the blow, and as she swept out of the room, she laughingly observed, "How satisfactory for Captain Poynter that his adversaries on that occasion were magnanimous men and not women; only think what a size the story would have attained to by this time!"

"Curse her," said Waverley, as the door closed behind her, "curse her! How magnificent she looked though when she flared up! I don't know whether I love, admire, or hate her most, I believe I do all three." Let us leave him to his reflections, and follow Edith to her sanctum.

Poor Edith! though she never flinched one iota while in his presence, no sooner had she locked her own door than she gave way to her grief. Throwing herself on to the sofa she buried her head among the cushions, and sobbed as though her heart would break.

"Oh, why don't you come back and put an end to all this wretched doubt and suspense. Surely nobody could ever believe such things of you! Oh, if dear Lady Grenville were only here! I would go straight to her and tell her all that he says. It's a lie," raising herself up on the sofa, "if such a thing were true, many more must have known of it, and Sir Arthur would never speak of

him in such affectionate terms. Oh, what shall I do? I will write to Lady Grenville at all events, and tell her everything." She sat down at her writing-table which commanded a view of the spot where the hounds had killed their fox the day that Cis lent his grey horse to Sir Arthur. How the happy days of that season were photographed on her mind; "To think that I was so happy then," she said, "I can't believe that I am the same woman, all is so different."

To Lady Grenville, who, invalid as she was, had been persuaded to try Kissengen, she wrote, pouring out her tale of sorrow and distress. She hid nothing from her. She begged her to write to Cis. "If you don't," wrote she, "I shall be tempted to forget myself, and do what I suppose the world would call an unmaidenly thing, in fact, write to him myself. It is cruel that he should be thousands of miles away, and in ignorance that his reputation is being blackened like this."

A week later came an answer from Lady Grenville, full of love and sympathy, telling her to cheer up, that the waters had done marvels for her, and that she hoped to be home again in a fortnight's time. "I will come the instant the doctors will let me travel," said she. "All will come right. What you have been told is a

gratuitous lie, and I have my own ideas as to the originator of the story."

Lady Grenville, before she went abroad, saw plainly how matters stood as regarded Waverley's intentions; she disliked him immensely and was most thankful to see that he had not the remotest chance of ousting Cis from his place in Edith's heart.

Chapter XXIII.

COUNTERPLOT.

Lady Grenville had also written to Sir Arthur Linton, asking him to come over and see her as soon as ever she got back home. This Sir Arthur did at once, and the morning after she arrived saw the two in close confab.

Sir Arthur was most indignant at the idea of Waverley daring, even if he had heard it second hand, to retail such a report to Edith, without first taking the trouble to verify it.

"The man is madly jealous, remember," said Lady Grenville. "I never have had a high opinion of him, and I consider him quite capable under the circumstances, of fabricating anything that he thinks may injure his rival, as I have no doubt he considers Captain Poynter to be."

"Well, there is no denying the fact that people here did think they would make a match of it, during the hunting season before last, and not a few fancy that he received his *congé* at Edith's hands, the time that they met in London. You know how people will talk, and if you give

them the slightest groundwork to concoct a story upon, they will soon manufacture one. I have no doubt this Waverley has often heard Poynter's name coupled with hers."

"You dined with Captain Poynter the very night before his disappearance."

"Certainly I did, and I never remember to have seen him in such spirits, until the very end of the evening. I can recall, too, the last topic of conversation. I told him that Edith Hamilton had inherited her aunt's fortune; he did not make the slightest remark, and I noticed that he seemed dazed and very absent the whole of the remaining time, and that he answered me very much at random; but, feeling sure that he was very fond of her, I imagined that the mention of her name had set him thinking about her. I took my departure about midnight, and from then till now I have never set eyes upon him."

"Now, tell me, Sir Arthur, did Captain Poynter, in the course of conversation, ever express his views as regards heiress hunters?"

"Didn't he, that's all? He had the most supreme contempt for any man who would marry a woman for her money. So strongly, in fact, did he feel on this subject, that, when young

Frank Auberon who was engaged to a pretty, penniless maiden, chucked her over, and married elderly Miss Goldham, and was so enabled to remain in the Guards, instead of either selling out, or exchanging to a West India regiment, Poynter, instead of congratulating him on his good fortune, as most other people did, (Miss Goldham was in society of course) positively refused to meet him at dinner. I always considered he was hardly sane when he got on that topic."

Lady Grenville pondered deeply for a minute or two, and then rising from the sofa with an alacrity that astounded Sir Arthur, said with great emphasis,

"I have it! It was immediately after you told him that Edith had become an heiress, that he so completely changed his plans. and without a word vanished from our gaze."

"By Jove," said he, "what a blind fool I have been all this time! You are right, Lady Grenville, I am certain."

"I see it all, of course I do. Well, our mode of procedure is very simple now, at all events. You are quite sure that Edith Hamilton loves him."

"As positive as I am that I love her."

"Then, it is our duty to bring them together."

"I declare that if cubbing were not just begun I would go and fetch him back myself, but I am tied by the leg for the next seven months."

"What an enthusiast you are about hunting, to be sure."

"Indeed I am. I think it is just the one sport of which one can never weary. What is it that man who thinks he can write hunting songs says in 'Forty Minutes'?"

> Not in the spring of life alone, the chase
> true pleasure gives,
> For even in maturer years, its charm unfailing
> lives.
> Ah, who but they who've quaffed the cup, can
> hope to sing its joys,
> E'en in extreme old age we find its retrospect
> ne'er cloys.

Then you see, when, as in my case, a man hunts his own hounds, it is almost impossible for him to have a bad day. I declare I am quite sorry for the division that come out simply to gallop and jump. What a lot they lose! To my mind one of the most beautiful sights in the world is to see a pack of hounds, with their fox sinking in front of them, persevering under difficulties, such as a cutting, unkind wind, a

dry fallow, a road. It is lovely to see how they fly to the faintest note from a hound that they can trust, and how, when they *can* run on a bit, they bustle and drive, and try so hard to carry it on a bit, and then at last, when they are fairly beat, how wistfully they look up in your face, as much as to say, 'we can do no more, give us a lift, do.'"

"How graphic! I declare if I were not so deeply interested in poor Edith's affair, I could let you run on for ever in that strain. But, as it is, I can think of nothing else but her, and my orders to you are, to sit down at once, and write to Captain Poynter. I will do ditto, and we will compare notes. Good gracious! there goes the gong for luncheon; how time flies! We must postpone the letter-writing till afterwards."

"Personally, I am sure that one of the letters will be none the worse for a postponement," said Sir Arthur. "I am simply ravenous; for I have been rattling the Auchterbardy Woodlands since half-past five this morning, and as I came straight here and sent the hounds home, you may imagine that I *am* hungry."

"Poor man; you must be famished. Come along at once. Bring to-day's paper, Page," said

she to the butler, who announced luncheon. "To-day is Monday, and I think there is a mail on Wednesday from Liverpool; we mustn't lose a day."

Luncheon over, and the letters written, Sir Arthur took his departure.

"Dash it all," said he, as he rode home, "I was in a deuce of a hurry to tell him he could have Magnum Bonum back again; he is the best I ever rode, bar none. However, Poynter is the very best chap that ever hunted with me, and if he will only come and settle in the neighbourhood, I can manage to spare him even my best horse. I know who will ride Magnum Bonum, if things only come right. Lord, how he will fly with her!"

Very fond of Cis Poynter was Sir Arthur. He did not take to very many people, but where he did take a fancy he was the staunchest of friends; and when he had said to Lady Grenville that had it not been the cubbing season he would have gone over to Montreal and brought Cis back, he said not one whit more than he meant. As Master, hunting his own hounds, however, it was quite out of the question. He could only, therefore, content himself with the hope that the joint effusions of Lady Grenville and himself would

have the desired effect, and induce the truant at once to return to England.

The instant he reached home he at once wrote to the secretary of the club at which he had dined with Cis Poynter, telling him what had been said, and asking him if there was the very slightest foundation for the report; asking him also to wire an answer back at once. He next day received the following telegram :—

"Not the slightest foundation for such a rumour; never heard of it till now. Gentleman in question still a member."

This he put into an envelope and sent over post haste to Lady Grenville, with a note explaining what he had done. She was of course delighted, and sent it on by another messenger to Edith Hamilton.

It was, perhaps, fortunate for Mr. Waverley that he had left the country, and was in fact at that moment on the Continent.

A fortnight later, on returning from a grouse drive one evening, Sir Arthnr found another telegram on the hall table.

"From Poynter. To Sir Arthur Linton. Sail "Moravian" next Saturday; say nothing."

"What does he mean?" soliloquized Sir Arthur. "I must tell Lady Grenville, she is so

anxious; and his coming back is just as much her doing as mine; a bit more in fact, for if she hadn't sent for me to talk it over, I should still have been in the dark. I shouldn't much care to be in Mr. Waverley's shoes under the present circumstances. However, I can't help what Poynter says; I shall tell Lady Grenville at once." Ringing the bell, he said to the servant who answered it, "I want a note taken to Lady Grenville immediately. Tell one of the grooms to get ready directly."

He then penned the following:—

"Dear Lady Grenville,—I enclose you a telegram just received from Captain Poynter; he ought to be here in ten days. You will see that he instructs me to say nothing; but I think that the least I can do is to tell you, as I know how anxious you are.

"Very sincerely yours,

"ARTHUR LINTON."

The plot thickens!

"Tell the groom to wait for an answer," said he, as he gave the servant the note.

Great was Lady Grenville's glee when she received the note and telegram.

"Come and see me as soon as you can," was all she said in reply; as, however, he was cubbing a long way off the next day, he did not get over to her till the following morning.

"This is, indeed, good news," said she, as she came forward to greet him.

"It must be, since it enables you to get up from your sofa without an effort."

"Upon my word, I believe that my visit to Kissingen, coupled with the welcome intelligence conveyed in your letter, have made a young woman of me again. I mean to be present at the wedding, I declare, and I shall walk up the church on your arm."

"I somehow fancy that, somewhere or other, I have read something anent the inadvisability of enumerating the juvenile feathered biped previous to its appearance on the stage of life."

"Well, it does savour a little of that, I confess; but, joking apart, the battle is already more than half won, since we have induced him to come back again."

"I shall write to him at once," said Sir Arthur, "care of the agents at Liverpool, so that he will get the letter directly he arrives in the Mersey; I shall tell him to come straight to me."

"That's right, he is sure to go to you. By-the-

way, Edith was over here yesterday. Poor girl! I longed to tell her that he was coming home, and to tell the truth; I did, to a certain extent, prepare her for his reappearance in England, as I said that I had heard from you, telling me that there was a possibility of his being in England next year. Terribly wrong of me, I grant, but it was worth while, as even that brought the light of hope to her eyes at once, and she left me almost in good spirits."

"But what of this wretched fellow Waverley," said Sir Arthur.

"Ah! I have been thinking much of that, and I have come to the conclusion that for Edith's sake they must not meet."

"H—m," said Sir Arthur, "I must confess that I have been looking forward with considerable pleasure to a judicious application of the whip on the part of Captain Poynter to that gentleman's person."

"Not a bit more than he deserves, I grant; at the same time, it would but create a scandal, and as this man is her cousin, and as, moreover, Mr. Hamilton has always had a very tender spot in his heart for him, I am quite sure that a collision would, under the circumstances, be most *mal a propos*."

"He isn't in the neighbourhood now, is he?"

"No, he has been away some time, but is expected in a fortnight's time for driving; I hear they have more birds than ever this year, you are certain to be shooting there, and you will meet—can't you give him a hint?"

"Certainly I can, but then Poynter will be here before then. I see but one way out of the difficulty, and that is that this Waverley should not return here at all; Poynter is the last man in the world to allow such an aspersion on his character to pass unchallenged."

"Of course he will be furious," said she, "but it would be far better, that if possible, Mr. Hamilton should be kept in blissful ignorance of the whole affair, for various reasons."

"How would this do?" said he, after a pause of a minute, "I will write to Waverley—where is he, by-the-bye?"

"In Paris."

"Well then, I will write to him at once to his club, to be forwarded, asking him to come and stay with me for a few days, before he goes to the Hamiltons. He is very fond of shooting, and holds his gun straight enough, though he is an awfully footy man on a horse. I will hold out

the coppice beat as an inducement, we always get a lot of pheasants there, and as the trees are very low indeed we can shoot it as early as we like. I will then append a postscript. 'By the way, Captain Poynter, who is a great friend of the Hamiltons, will be staying with me. I forget whether you have ever met. If not, however, there is a treat in store for you, as he is about the best all-round man in the service, and if you want a turn with the gloves, he can give you as many wrinkles as any professor of the noble art.'—Something of that sort, what do you think?"

"Think! Why, that you are a most wonderful inventive genius, and also, that you need not count on Mr. Waverley's gun for the coppice beat."

"Why is my letter to Waverley like a wasp?"

"Because its sting is in its tail. What a vile riddle!" said she.

"Thanks for the compliment; some people *are* good with their left."

"Now let us be serious, though I feel in such spirits as never were; will you write this letter at once?"

"Yes, I will, directly I get home. And now good-bye."

"Good-bye, and God bless you, my trusty friend."

That evening saw the despatch of a letter, worded pretty nearly as Sir Arthur had expressed himself to Lady Grenville."

Chapter XXIV.

THINGS ONE WOULD RATHER HAVE LEFT UNSAID.

Let us transport ourselves to Paris, and peep over Waverley's shoulder, as he opens the letters just brought up along with his café-au-lait and brioche.

"A big budget from the club," said he, as he tore open the envelope. "What the deuce do they forward such rubbish as this for, I wonder," chucking on one side a lot of bilious looking documents. "Confound the bills, can't I get away from them even on this side the water. Ah!" said he, "as he spotted Sir Arthur's crest, "that's better; I thought they would hardly forward me a lot of bills alone." Breaking the seal, he read what we have just heard, all but the postscript.

"Go! I should rather think I would go; the coppice beat is a real good one, we got four hundred head to six guns last time I shot there. Halloa! I missed this. 'Captain Poynter! Good all-round man! First-rate with the gloves!' Curse him! So he is coming back, is he?" And

crushing the letter in his hand, he began to pace rapidly backwards and forwards. Another mauvais quart d'heure, we fear, for the recording angel.

"Oh, what a fool I was to speak of him as I did, to Edith! But she drove me nearly mad with rage. I can't substantiate a word that I said. I can't accept this invitation. I can't go back to the Hamiltons; I am sure to meet him there. How am I to tell Edith that I lied? for lie I did, and that most infernally."

Poor brute! it is bad enough to suffer at any time, but when you are utterly unable to say that you do not richly deserve it, it hits all the harder.

In this instance, Waverley was reaping a wonderfully early harvest; it was barely a month since, stung to desperation by Edith's championing Cis Poynter, he had lied to her, and said that he for one should be very much surprised if he dared to show his face again, and yet here was the man perhaps at home already.

The whole of that day he wandered aimlessly about the Boulevards and the Bois, and did not return home till, faint with hunger and wearied out, he sought the rest of his own hotel. He had a scratch meal in his room, and then, somewhat refreshed, he sat down to write to Edith Hamilton.

He was really penitent.

"Of course he was," the reader will say, "he was found out, so naturally he was very sorry for himself."

Be that as it may, he felt that the only course left open to him was to make a clean breast of it; he did not attempt to exonerate himself, he confessed that his intense love for her had made any course appear fair. He had been determined to win her, and had stuck at nothing; he wrote a long letter, winding up as follows:—

"There was not one single syllable of truth in what I said to you about Captain Poynter, and nothing but desperation could have made me lie about him as I did. My only excuse is, that I could not bear to lose you. I know that you prefer this man to me. Perhaps the time may come when I may be able to wish you and him happiness together; it will be long ere that comes to pass, though. Still, instinct tells me that you will marry him. Good-bye, my darling Edith. I don't think you will ever see me again. You remember the offer I had made me to go to Borneo? I am writing to say that I will take it if the vacancy is not filled up."

Our readers will readily imagine what a relief it

was to Edith to receive the foregoing letter. She had been dreading her cousin's reappearance at Auchengarry, and now that this weight was lifted off her mind she quickly began to recover her lost roses. She felt sure, too, from Lady Grenville's manner, that Cis would be home sooner than her words would lead her to suppose. Once in England, who could tell when they might not meet? She found herself wondering whether he still cared for her, and was determined that if he did not he should never guess her secret.

Chapter XXV.

A TARDY WOOER.

About a week after this came a note from Lady Grenville.

"Do come over, my dear child, to-morrow morning; I want your assistance particularly."

Lady Grenville's wish was her law, so ordering the ponies to be round at eleven, she drove over to Auchengarry.

"Bring them to the door at four o'clock," said she, as she drove up to the door at Auchengarry, and, entering the house, made straight for Lady Grenville's boudoir without troubling to ring the bell. She was as much at home here as in her father's house.

Now the windows of Lady Grenville's boudoir did not overlook the approach to the hall door, yet anyone sitting there could see any carriage that came as it wound round a curve in the drive some three hundred yards away. She had placed herself so that she could command this spot while chatting away to her companion; and getting up from the sofa as she saw Edith's

ponies trotting briskly along the drive, she told Cis Poynter, for he it was and no other that was closeted with her, to make himself as happy as he could for ten minutes, while she gave some instructions to the servants.

After a very good and fast passage in the "Moravian," Cis, Garryowen, and Rosebud had safely arrived at Liverpool. He received Sir Arthur's letter directly the tender came off, and leaving the horses in the care of a first-rate livery stable keeper, whom he knew years before when his troop was at out-quarters at Seaforth, he caught the afternoon train to the north, arriving at Kiltroon late that night. He had wired his intentions to Sir Arthur, so that a dog-cart met him at the station, and by eleven o'clock he was sitting comfortably at supper.

"Well, old chap," said his host, "you must be uncommon glad to get home again?"

"Indeed I am," said Cis; "but tell me first of all, is there a gentleman called Waverley staying in the neighbourhood?"

"No, there isn't; and what's more, he is not in England, nor is he likely to be. And if you particularly want to see him you had better go to Borneo, for I believe he is just off there. I wrote to him, asking him to come here and shoot the

coppice beat; and I held out an additional inducement in the shape of yourself. I said that you would be here, and that you were a perfect marvel with the gloves, and would be very glad to put them on with him. And, would you believe it? he actually declined the invitation."

"But I must meet him. He has lied about me; and that to one whose good opinion I value more than that of all the world."

"If it is any satisfaction to you, I can tell you that he has retracted every word that he said, in a letter written to Edith Hamilton from Paris, where he was when he got my letter. He naturally saw that the game was up, and that he had no alternative but to throw himself on his cousin's mercy, which he did. I set her mind at rest, though; as directly Lady Grenville told me, I wrote to the secretary of your club, asking him if there was any truth whatever in the report. It is needless to tell you that I knew it was a gratuitous lie; but I wanted proof, for her sake. I received a wire next day saying that there was not a word of truth in it."

"Thanks, old man," said Cis Poynter. "I don't mind telling you that I have loved Edith Hamilton since the day that I saw her first."

"Then why the deuce were you such a fool as

to cut and run, without asking if she was equally enamoured of you?"

"Simply because I found just as I was going to ask her, that she had become a great heiress. Yes, you were right when you said you thought that was it in your letter."

"Well, what are you going to do now that you have come home, I should like to know? She is just as great an heiress now as she was then."

"I know it," said Cis, "and I feel in a sense ashamed of my weakness, but I love her more than I love my pride."

"I *am* so glad to hear you say that," said Sir Arthur. "Go in and win, my boy. Now listen to me; I have promised Lady Grenville that you shall go and see her to-morrow. She wants you to be there early, as she says she has such a lot to say to you. We are cubbing at Fulwood in the morning at 7.30. I have ordered a gee for you. I propose that you put in two or three hours with the hounds, and then trot off to her ladyship. You will not be more than four or five miles from there. How does that suit you?"

"Splendidly," said Cis.

"Well then, let's get to bed, for it's after midnight a long time."

The moment that Sir Arthur received the wire

from Cis he sent it on to Lady Grenville, and she had answered it by the bearer, asking him to send Cis over there the following morning.

We have now landed Edith at the door of the boudoir; not the very slightest prevision had she that the other side of that door was the man, who, though she believed him in the flesh to be 3,500 miles away, had ever since he fled been ever present in her thoughts.

Cis too, was equally ignorant of her proximity. Lady Grenville had promised him that he should see Edith in the course of a day or two, but he had just come to the conclusion that he could not wait another day even, and had decided that he would ride over that very afternoon.

Edith opened the door and entered the room; he was sitting with his back to the door in a big arm-chair, completely absorbed with thoughts of her. He heard the door open and close again, but thought of course that it was Lady Grenville. "It's no use, dear Lady Grenville," said he, "I can't wait till to-morrow. I can't wait at all. I must go over and tell her how I love her; I feel as if I should suffocate; every minute seems a week."

Contrary to custom, Lady Grenville did not answer; he heard a sound like a sob or a gasp, and turning his head, the sight that met his eyes

made him bound out of his chair and cross the room in two strides. She stood spell-bound!

"My darling," he said, "can you ever forgive me?" The spell was broken,

Plainly as lips could speak it, her eyes confessed her love. He held out his arms; for an instant she hesitated, and then she entered the haven of rest.

"Thank God," was all Cis said. He led her to the sofa, and setting her gently down he bent his knee, and in this attitude made his confession. He told how he had loved her all along, how he had thought the cup almost at his lips when it was dashed away by the tidings that she was so great an heiress. Suffice it to say that it did not take long to make his peace.

"It was too cruel, though, to leave me without a word. The awful suspense and uncertainty nearly broke my heart. But I have got you now, my love," said she, "and now that it has come, it was well worth all the misery that I have suffered."

The moments flew on electric wings, and when a chair which was discreetly overturned in the next room by Lady Grenville, recalled them to the every day world, they found that they had been living in a little paradise of their own for nearly an hour and a half. As Lady Grenville

entered, she saw at a glance that all was well. "You need not tell me anything," said she, "I can see that the dearest hope of my life has been realized."

"Yes, dear Lady Grenville," said Cis, "and we can neither of us ever thank you half enough for all that you have done for us."

"Tell me, were Sir Arthur and I right in our surmise, as to why you went away as you did?"

"Perfectly right; that, and nothing else, was the cause of my departure; however, *nous avons changé tout cela*, and I have now made up my mind that it is more humane to marry an heiress, than to let her pine away, because she cannot get the man of her choice."

"Upon my word, sir, you have an uncommonly good opinion of yourself, hasn't he, Edith?" Edith's heart was too full for badinage as yet, but the look of love that she gave Cis, spoke literally volumes.

After luncheon the happy couple had another long *tête-á-tête*, and then Edith drove home. "To-morrow at half-past eleven," she said, as he tucked her in. This referred to an appointment, which she was to make for him with Mr. Hamilton on the morrow. On arrival at the castle, he found his host on tenterhooks to hear the news.

"Well!" said Sir Arthur.

"It's all right," said Cis.

"Better luck than you deserve, you shilly-shallying beggar; blessed if you are half good enough for her, so there!"

"You are right there, Linton! I have been thinking as I rode home that fate has been uncommonly kind to me."

"Kind to you! rather! Why my dear fellow, you treated the girl as badly as man possibly could. You began by showing her that you preferred her society infinitely to that of any other woman, and you must have seen that she did ditto as regards yourself. I did at, all events. I don't say much, but I am like the Irishman's parrot, I think a deuce of a lot! Then you call on her in London the instant she comes up, take her to Tatt's to see the gees, arrange to travel down here with her, and then without 'with your leave,' or 'by your leave,' you cut your lucky, and place that frightful Atlantic Ocean between you. And all because why? because she had the bad luck to inherit a fortune. And now you have come back, and had the sense to do what you might have done nearly a year and a half ago, and so saved both yourself and her the wretchedness of all those months. Thank goodness though, that you have seen the error of your ways in time."

"Yes, slate me as much as you like," said Cis; "I deserve it all. I know I ought to be awfully ashamed of myself, and so I am really; but still I feel just inclined to sit for the picture '*L'homme qui rit.*'"

Chapter XXV.

WHO—WHOOP!

Next morning Cis hacked over to Auchengarry after breakfast, where the welcome he received from Edith's father left no doubt in his mind as to his acceptability as a suitor for her hand.

"Upon my word though, Poynter, I did not think that you would ever be in your present position, as I had got into my head that Edith would marry her cousin, Charlie Waverley, who had been a playmate of hers since very early days. However, I suppose it was only cousinly affection after all, as I heard from him yesterday, telling me that he had accepted an appointment, in Borneo, of all places in the world. Still, I hear that there is plenty to let off your gun at there, and that will be a great attraction to Master Charlie, as he is a capital shot and very keen."

Our story is on its last legs, and we will proceed to wind it up as concisely as possible before the curtain descends and obscures from the view of the reader the *dramatis personæ*, whose evolution

from the regions of fiction has given the author much pleasure.

Cis Poynter, on his return to Ovington that evening, sent in his papers, and as there was not the slightest necessity for a long engagement, the week before Christmas saw him married to Edith Hamilton.

The second week in January found them back at Auchengarry, Mr. Hamilton having insisted on their making it their headquarters, at all events for the hunting season. Dick Goodwin and Ronald obtained three months' leave, and persuaded Bawtry to come, and bring the two girls with him. Owen's brother dying very shortly after Cis left Canada, he also decided to come home with the Lachine party. Helen and Sybil, after a visit to the respective homes of their future husbands, where it is needless to say that they completely charmed everybody, came on to Auchengarry, arriving there in time to welcome Cis and his bride. Mr. Hamilton determined to have the whole Canadian coterie assembled beneath his roof, and did not rest until Mr. Owen accompanied the quintette. What a happy réunion it was the reader will easily imagine. It may interest him also to know that letters received from Borneo announced the fact that Waverley was

settling down in his new home with every prospect of success. It is never too late to mend.

Blessed with health, wealth, and happiness, the greatest blessings which can fall to the lot of mortal man, we will bid Cis and Edith adieu.

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